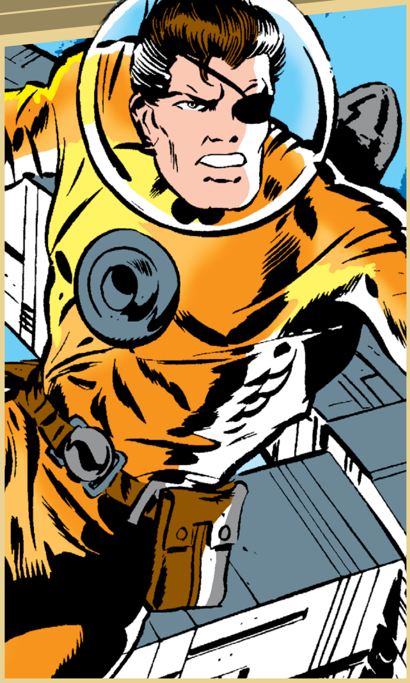
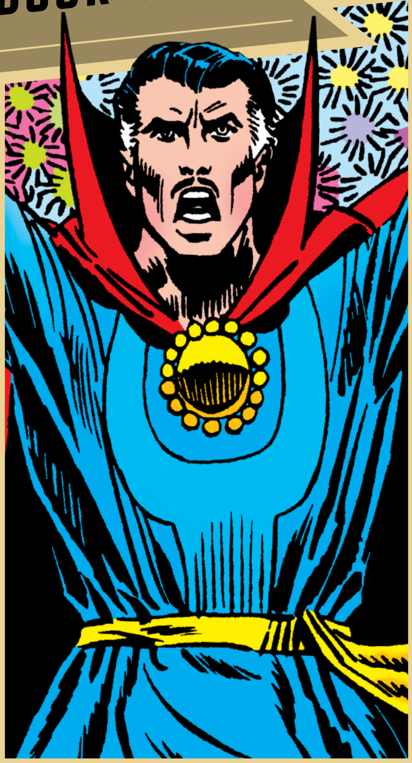
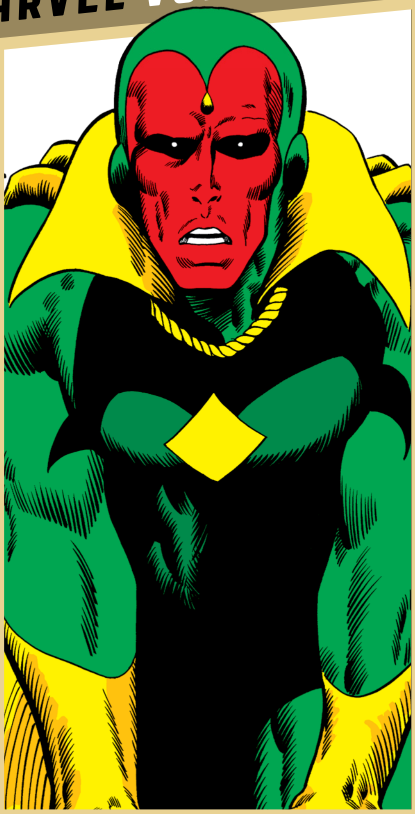
MARVEL CREATOR COLLECTION NO. 1

BACK TO THE SAVAGE LAND

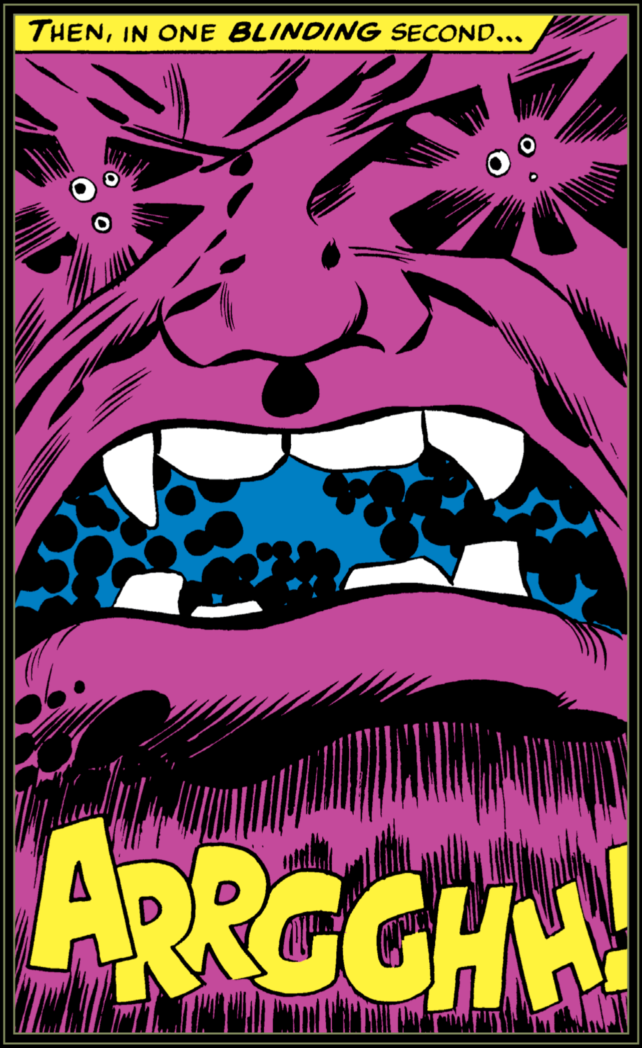
BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH AT MARVEL VOL. 1







MARVEL


THEN, IN ONE BLINDING SECOND...
ARRGGHH!

FANTAGRAPHICS
Editor: Dr. Michael Dean
Supervising Editor: Gary Groth
Designer: Dana Collins
Restoration: Paul Baresh, Kaz Strzepek
Associate Publisher: Eric Reynolds
Publisher: Gary Groth

Introduction is copyright © 2025 Jon B. Cooke

MARVEL PUBLISHING
VP, Production and Special Projects: Jeff Youngquist
Manager, Special Projects: Brian Overton
Editor, Special Projects: Sarah Singer
Manager, Licensed Publishing: Jeremy West
VP, Business Development and
Licensed Publishing: Sven Larsen
VP, Comic Sales and Content Planning: David Gabriel
Editor in Chief: C.B. Cebulski

© 2026 MARVEL

Fantagraphics Books, Inc.
7563 Lake City Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

www.fantagraphics.com
facebook.com/fantagraphics
@fantagraphics.com

EU Authorised Representative: Easy Access System
Europe - Mustamäe tee 50, 10621 Tallinn, Estonia,
easproject.com, gpsr.requests@easproject.com
ISBN: 979-8-8750-0152-9
Library of Congress Control Number: 2025935195
First Fantagraphics Books edition: November 2025
Printed in China

This previously published content includes negative depictions and/or mistreatment of people or cultures. These stereotypes were wrong then and are wrong now. Rather than remove this content, we want to acknowledge its harmful impact, learn from it and spark conversation to create a more inclusive future together.

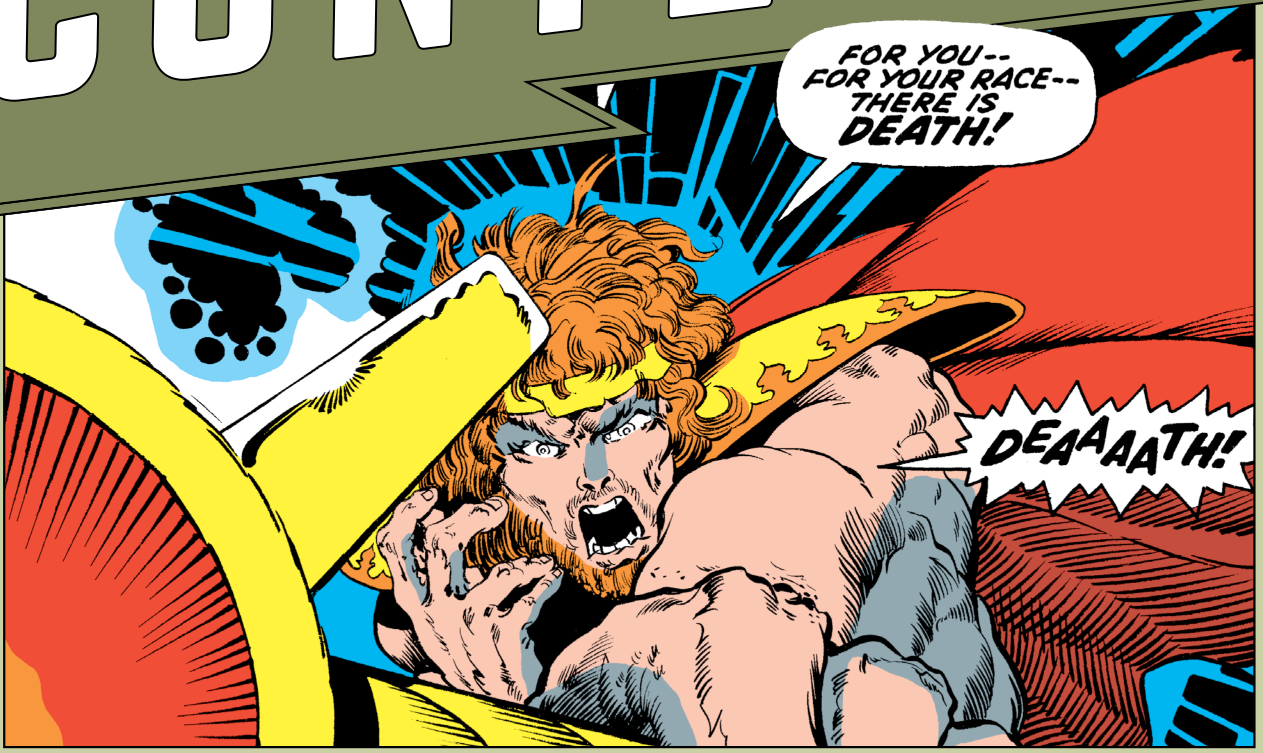
MARVEL CREATOR COLLECTION NO. 1

BACK TO THE SAVAGE LAND

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH AT MARVEL VOL. 1

MARVEL

CONTENTS


FOR YOU-- FOR YOUR RACE-- THERE IS DEATH!
DEAAAATH!

MARVEL CREATOR COLLECTION NO. 1:
BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH AT MARVEL VOL. 1

Barry Windsor-Smith pencils except where otherwise noted. When Windsor-Smith's tenure on a title ends before the storyline is concluded, a brief summary of the story resolution follows his run on the title.

XII

Barry Windsor-Smith:
From Forest Gate London
to the Marvel Bullpen

01

The X-Men #53
(first U.S. art) cover (Feb. 1969)
"The Rage of Blastaar!"

17

The X-Men #54
cover (March 1969)

18

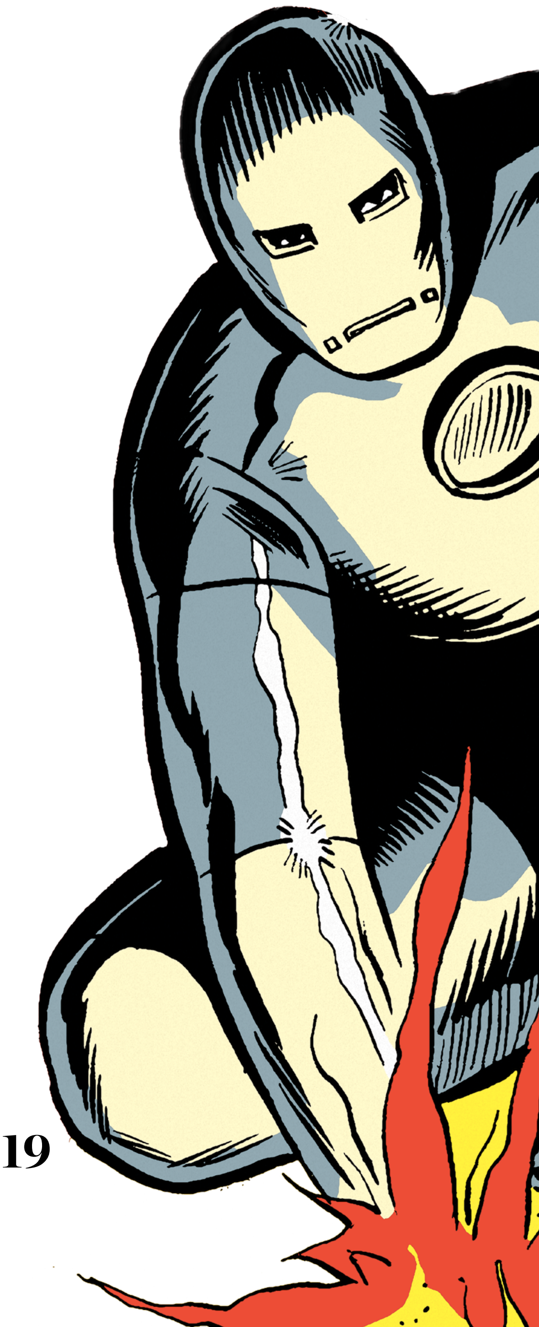
The X-Men #55
cover (April 1969)

19

Captain Marvel #11
cover (March 1969)

20

Marvel Super-Heroes #19
(first Ka-Zar art)
cover (March 1969)



22

Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #10
(March 1969)
(pp. 2-4 in issue otherwise drawn by Frank Springer)

25

Nick Fury Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #11
cover (April 1969)
(Frank Springer art with face redrawn by Windsor-Smith)

26

Nick Fury Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. #12
(May 1969)
"Hell Hath No Fury!"
Summary of storyline resolution

49

The Avengers #66
cover (July 1969)
"Betrayal"

69

The Avengers #67
(Aug. 1969)
"We Stand at ... Armageddon!"
Summary of storyline resolution

91

The Avengers #98
cover (inks) (April 1972)
"Let Slip the Dogs of War!" (pencils)

114

The Avengers #99
cover (inks) (May 1972)
"-- They First Make Mad" (pencils)

140

The Avengers #100
cover (pencils and inks) (June 1972)
"Whatever Gods There Be!"
(pencils and partial inks)

159

Tower of Shadows #5
(May 1970)
"The Demon That Devoured Hollywood!"

165

Tower of Shadows #7
(Sept. 1970)
"The Scream of Things"

172

Chamber of Darkness #3
(Feb. 1970)
"The Warlock Tree!"

179

Chamber of Darkness #4
(April 1970)
"The Sword and the Sorcerors!"
(pencils and inks)

187

Astonishing Tales #3 (Ka-Zar)
(Dec. 1970)
"Back to the Savage Land!"

197

Astonishing Tales #4 (Ka-Zar)
(Feb. 1971)
"The Sun God!"

207

Astonishing Tales #5 (Ka-Zar)
(April 1971)
"Rampage!"

217

Astonishing Tales #6 (Ka-Zar)

(June 1971)
"'Ware the Winds of Death!"

227

Astonishing Tales #10 (Ka-Zar)

(Feb. 1972)
"To Die in Flames!"

249

Monsters on the Prowl #9

(Feb. 1971)
"Desert Scream!!"
(inks of Jack Katz pencils)

255

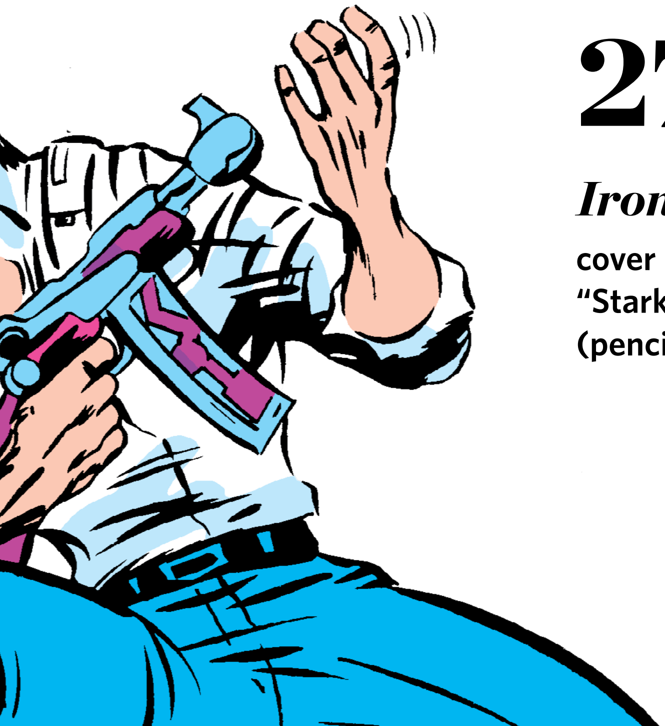
Iron Man #47

(June 1972)
"Must There Be an Iron Man?"

277

Iron Man #232

cover (July 1988)
"Stark Wars: Epilogiue: Intimate Enemies"
(pencils, plot, color)



299

Iron Man #243

(June 1989)
"Heartbeaten"
(inks of Bob Layton pencils)
Summary of storyline resolution

322

Doctor Strange #179

cover (April 1969)

323

Marvel Premiere #3

(Doctor Strange) cover (July 1972)
"While the World Spins Mad!
(plot and pencils)

344

Marvel Premiere #4

(Doctor Strange) cover (Sept. 1972)
"The Spawn of Sligguth!"
(full pencils pp. 1-3, layouts finished by Frank Brunner pp. 4-20)
Summary of storyline resolution

If the essence of late-1960s white Western culture could be condensed into one moment, it might be this Marvel bullpen scene conjured from the memory of Barry Windsor-Smith, then just Barry Smith on his first visit to the U.S. from the U.K.: “I remember one afternoon in the late summer of ’68, the radio was playing The Beatles’ latest song and as it came into the long, chanting coda one by one each person began singing along — Herb, John Romita, Morrie Kuromoto, Tony Mortarello, Marie, and a few others — all singing at the top of their lungs, ‘Naaa — NaNa, NaNaNaNaaa — Hey Ju-u-ude...’ It was wonderful; gave me chills of pleasure.”

Windsor-Smith told that story to Jon B. Cooke, the longtime comics historian and current editor of Comic Book Creator. *Starting in 1998 (when he was editor of* Comic Book Artist *magazine), Cooke has interviewed his friend on multiple occasions and also compiled as much biographical detail as he could about the British-born artist and fellow comics fan. Here, by way of introduction to this collection of Windsor-Smith’s early Marvel years, is Cooke’s account of the even earlier years that led up to a fruitful artistic debut. — MD*

KZAM!

BARRY WINDSOR SMITH

FROM FOREST GATE LONDON TO THE MARVEL BULLPEN

BY JON B. COOKE

Of his childhood, Barry Windsor-Smith wrote in *Opus* 2, “While not the improbably happy times of certain television shows, they were not all bad either. With an older brother and sister, and a younger brother, too, I was never mistreated, denied pocket money, or went without jam on my toast. We were an average working-class family living at the boundaries that separated London’s East End from the more gentrified suburbs of the Wanstead and Epping forests.”

Born to Nicolas Philip James Smith and Lena Violet Windsor, on May 25, 1949, the young Barry Smith — this was before he added his mum’s maiden name to honor her — was raised at 47 South Esk Road, a tree-lined street in the East End neighborhood of Forest Gate. His siblings included considerably older brother Nick; sister Kay, who was a bit older; and younger brother Melvin, nicknamed “Biff.” “Melvin had Down’s Syndrome,” Windsor-Smith’s close friend Steve Parkhouse told me. “He was a great kid. Barry’s mother had a lot to endure. She was a very strong woman in many ways, very well-grounded. Always looking out for her family in spite of the many problems they had to face. Nothing unusual about that — it was very typical of working-class families back then. They had to be integrated in the realities of life, no time for dreaming. Not like us baby boomers.”

Still, the young Windsor-Smith spent his days in precocious pursuit of his imagination, shunning sports and becoming an avid reader who spent hours graphically reproducing the images he encountered. “I have been interested in all forms of graphic art since childhood,” he explained to me in a 1998 *Comic Book Artist* interview. “At the same time, I was copying Wally Wood cartoons from *Mad* magazine I was also copying Leonardo Da Vinci. I perceived little difference between what is called fine art and what is considered otherwise.”

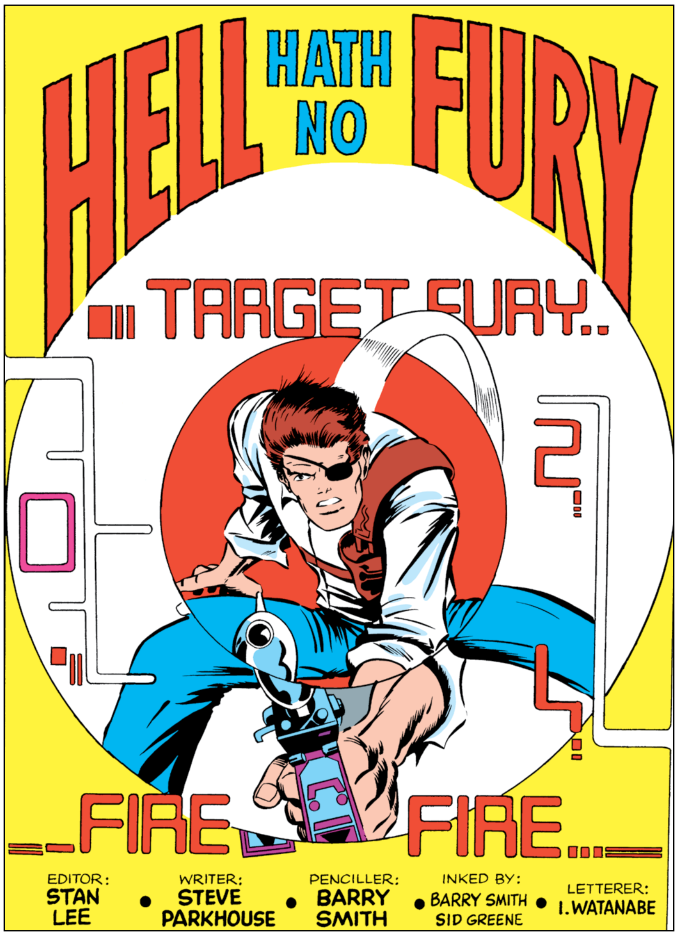
The boy was exposed to U.S. comics at the age of “about four or five,” he told George Khoury in a 2004 *True Brit* interview, “Once I discovered the Miller & Co. black-and-white reprints of American comics, I began to recognize and appreciate individual art styles, and style and clarity of how each artist told a story. So, I guess, by the middle years of my pre-teen youth, I’d become attracted to comics for both their story and their art. Once that was established in my head, I began to judge and criticize artists by their capabilities, their standards, and their limits. I was awfully precocious. It was like I’d become a functioning editor at the age of 11 or something.”

U.K. artists didn’t hold the same appeal as the Yanks. Though “stunned” by the artistry of Frank Bellamy on the legendary period strip *Heros the Spartan*, Windsor-Smith said British comic-book artists made little impression. “If I were [influenced],” he said, “I’d’ve probably tried to emulate them in one way or another and seek work in England rather than America.” In a nutshell, Smith explained in *True Brit*, “British material, no matter how well-produced it was, seemed rather lame, old fashioned.”

It was specifically the work of *Green Lantern* artist Gil Kane and *Adam Strange* artist Carmine Infantino, as well as the comic-book scripts of DC mainstays John Broome and Gardner Fox, that enthralled the young comics reader. But his most distinct early comics memory was Jack Kirby’s pre-Marvel work on the short-lived Archie Comics series, *The Double Life of Private Strong* (which he long misremembered as *The Private Life of Double Strong*). “Although some other hand was evident on the cover’s main figure, it was the background figures, and more so, the vignette film-strip-like drawings by Kirby that framed the cover that caught my eye,” he told me. “I’d never seen figure drawing like that before, dynamic, fluid, highly romanticized. Kirby stunned me with that first issue’s interior work.”

Smith was a decidedly bright child, and the educational system took notice. “Once the school system singled me out as a ‘talented boy,’” he told Khoury, “I began to realize that I perceived things and thought

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
ART FROM *X-MEN* #53



differently from my friends and most of the other children at school." He added, "But having this [creative] capability means nothing much at all if it's not nurtured. Having talent is as elementary and natural as being born. It's what you make of your life that matters. In my case, a working-class ethic superimposed on my own particular neural composition."

In the meantime, he discovered rock 'n' roll music, about which as a teen, he went about "absolutely adoring everything I was hearing, from The Beatles to The Stones," he told Gary Groth in a 1996 *Comics Journal* interview. "I loved anything that I thought was quality, and I certainly thought Lennon and McCartney were." Windsor-Smith himself eventually picked up the guitar and, on occasion, even performed in public (once in Carnegie Hall!).

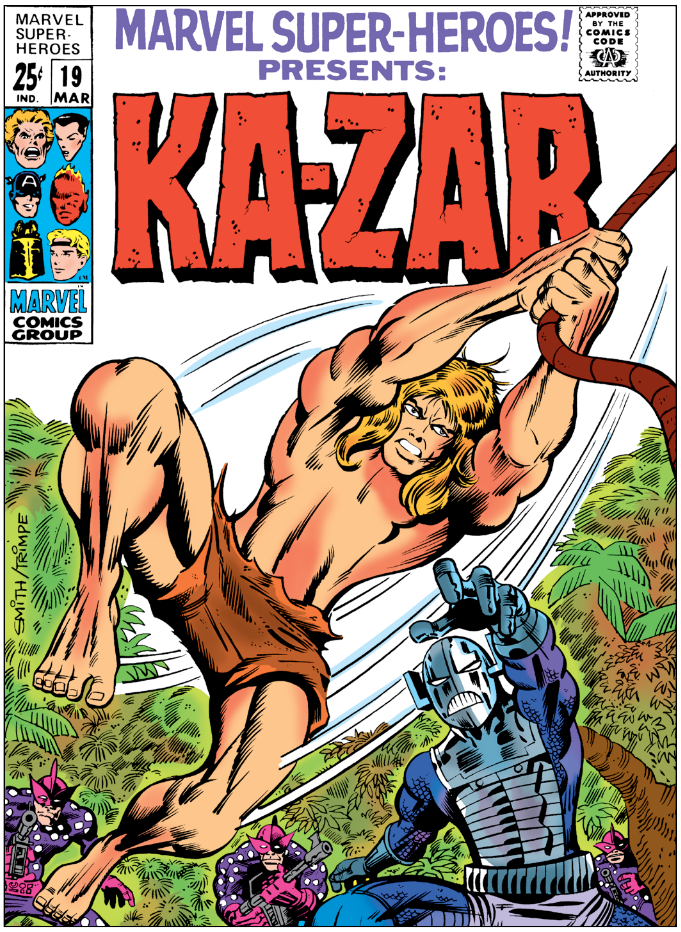
At about age 15, "I went to art school and I completely forgot about comic art," he told Eli Friedman in a 1972 interview in the fanzine *Ragnarok*. "I was doing things like graphic design and lettering and stuff like that."

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
ART FROM *NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.* #12

EAST HAM TECH

Steve Parkhouse was a creative student a year or so younger than Smith, also of Forest Gate. "I first met Barry in a classroom," he told me. "We were being inducted into a graphic-design course at a local polytechnic. The English education system provides for students who wish to learn a craft or a trade, as an electrician maybe, or glass engraver, or a joiner. Female students could take a course in hairdressing or dressmaking. It was a very good system for young people who were less academically inclined. We were too young for university and, even though I'd had an academic background, I needed an introduction to some kind of art training, because that was my passion. Our initial friendship wasn't particularly close. I was a little outspoken back then, with a smattering of book learning, and Barry was a keen reader. We talked about books a lot. Barry was reading a tome called *The Encyclopedia of Demonology* and we both found the material useful for storytelling potential. Even then, we were eager to conjure up some gruesome or hair-raising stories. We also both shared an insane and vicious sense of humor."

In Windsor-Smith's first life drawing class, the nude model for the class was Quentin Crisp, the flamboyant future author of The Naked Civil Servant, "standing there with this great shock of purple hair ..." Longtime nude model Crisp was expert at posing, and Windsor-Smith recalls that he made it look easy. "Only I drew Quentin nothing like Quentin. It looked like a comic-book hero. I think I even started to draw a cloak on him at some point. Just invented a cloak out of my own mind." At that point, the class instructor loomed behind the young artist. As Windsor-Smith related the story to Archie Goodwin in *Epic Illustrated* #7 (1981), "I thought, 'This is great. He's going to see how I really draw, and this is going to be a breeze.'" But the instructor was enraged and demanded, "Uh, laddie, what are yuh dooin'?" And then, "he rips this [sheet] off my pad and goes racing up into the center of the room where Quentin's posing and holds up my drawing for everybody to see. I'm sitting there going pale, and he's raving, 'D'yuh call this a dra-awin', laddie? This isna dra-a-win... it's bloody make believe!'" The lesson Windsor-Smith learned from this cringe-worthy event? "I hadn't even been looking at the model! I didn't realize you were supposed to see things. I just thought you were just supposed to get an impression of a fellow standing in front of you, and I thought I could draw fellows, like comic-book figures. It was so embarrassing. As the years



BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
ART FROM *MARVEL SUPER-HEROES #19* (KA-ZAR)

went by, I realized the power of drawing, of really being able to draw."

Windsor-Smith was grateful for his education at East Ham Technical College — a mere 20-minute walk from home. "I was extremely lucky to have such fine teachers," he told Valarie Jones in *SUBmedia* #1 in 1999. "They taught me how to draw and how to think."

As a classmate, Parkhouse recognized his friend's exceptional and rapidly developing talent. "Barry took off like a rocket," he said. "He seemed to know exactly what he wanted. Apart from graphics, we were given the option of life classes and, in the early days, we were encouraged to read mainstream books and write reviews, just to keep pace with our written English. I loved all that, but Barry was less enthusiastic. He just wanted to draw; it was a real passion. I wanted to paint and possibly get into mainstream illustration. (Neither of us realized at the time that the illustration market was sinking fast and would soon be replaced by photography.) We were taught to use [single-lens reflex] cameras, and how to develop and print our own photographs, and we used those skills to record our time at the school. That was a lot of fun. We both wanted to have fun and do our own thing; that was the zeitgeist of the era." It was a meaningful period during their growing friendship. Parkhouse continued, "As individuals, we were deadly serious about our work and our ambitions. Barry's levels of concentration and energy were truly phenomenal. He never gave up trying to improve and extend himself. He was an exceptional student but determined to go his own way. He was almost fierce in his dedication but, at the same time, we could crack up at the silliest things. I don't think either of us have changed that much. The three years we spent as close friends were the most formative of our lives, in my opinion. We learned to speak a different language, a visual language — a language of the heart, as well as the mind. What I didn't know then was that we were learning the art of storytelling, which would take us both into unknown dimensions."

"It was terrific being an art student in London in the mid-'60s," Windsor-Smith told Goodwin. "It was one of the things to be. You could be a pop star or a fashion model or an artist or an art student. It was one of the neat things to be, which was just pure luck for me." He also taught art classes during his final months at East Ham.

Despite his creative progress, Smith dropped out of art school for a spell in 1967, with only six or so months to go before graduation. "All sorts of weird things were happening to me, like *Sgt. Pepper's* came out," he said in the 1972 *Ragnarok* interview, referring to The Beatles' innovative record album. "I was like 17 or something … and it hit me like a cosmic head-bomb; it just changed my entire life …" Around this time, the young artist drifted back into the comics world courtesy of two new comics weeklies landing every Monday at newsagents throughout the British Isles.

Into the last half of the 1960s, as the Marvel Comics Group's popularity was ascending to ever-greater heights across the Atlantic, the Odhams comics division of British publisher IPC obtained the license to reprint Stan Lee and company's super-hero stories, most importantly in *Terrific* and *Fantastic*, a pair of weekly titles under Odhams' Power Comics imprint, which were sized to match the proportions of American comics. Adding to the appeal of the British hybrids, the "Fantastic Fan Mail" text pages appropriated the chumminess of Stan Lee's Bullpen Bulletins as jocular hosts "Affable Al" (managing editor Alfred Wallace) and "Big Bold Bart" (staff writer Bob Bartholomew) good-naturedly bantered in their faux "Stan-style" replies to reader letters. Up until Power Comics' demise, in early 1969, it reprinted hundreds of pages of prime Marvel super-hero material, much of it the work of Jack Kirby.

Along with the culturally revolutionary music of Lennon, McCartney, Harrison and Starr, Windsor-Smith was profoundly affected by the work of "King" Kirby, co-creator of the Marvel universe. When I asked him in 1998, what it was about Kirby's work that so enthralled him as a young artist, he replied that it was harder to point to anything about Kirby's work that wasn't enthralling, "as Kirby continued to evolve into the major conceptualist he was in the mid-'60s, with his drawings of figures and fantastic buildings and machines coming to such a breathtaking peak of knowledge, assurity and sheer visionary power utterly unequaled by anybody as yet."

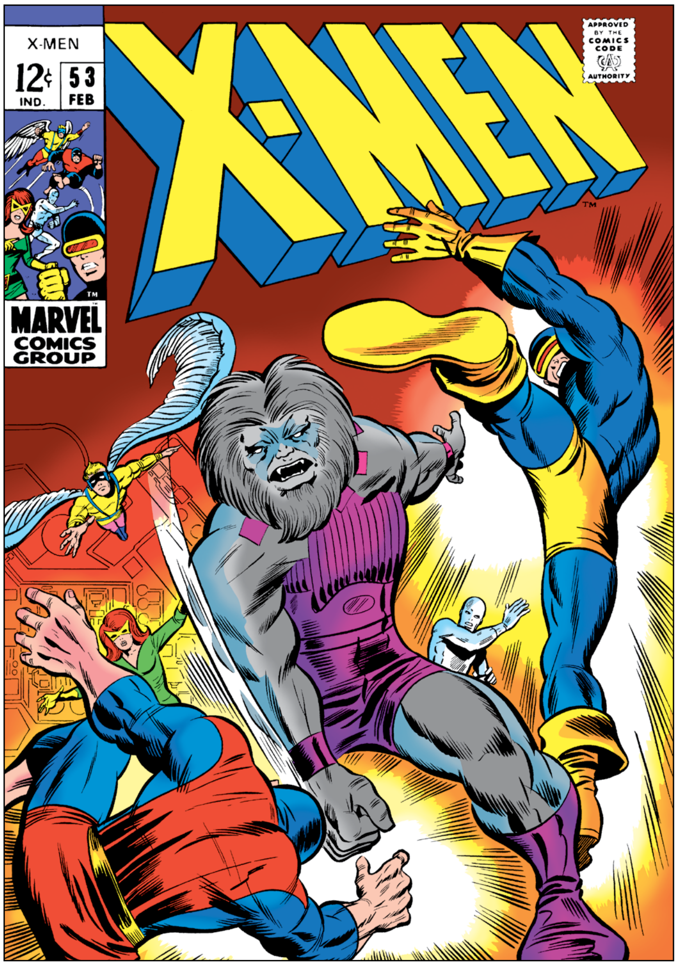
Smitten by the artistry of Kirby coming at him weekly in *Terrific* and *Fantastic* — which melded into a single title by early 1968 — Windsor-Smith, along with legions of "Kirby clones," made every effort to adopt that style through his early professional years, appropriating the anatomy, action sequences, and staging of his then middle-aged Marvel idol. But something in Windsor-Smith's storytelling ability and design sense struggled under the surface, suggesting the Kirby look was an ill fit with Windsor-Smith's natural tendencies.

Somewhere around this time, Windsor-Smith committed to a return to East Ham Tech for his final term. "When I went back," he shared, "it was like six weeks before the end of the whole thing ... and it turned out I had to have so much work done before the end of the [school] year." For that final project, Windsor-Smith decided to replicate Kirby's epic battle between The Thing and The Hulk, in *Fantastic Four* #25–26. As described in his *Ragnarok* interview, "I just redrew it and made it into a 60-page, 65-page thing. I penciled, inked, colored, and lettered it, and handed that in as my year's work. It took me like five weeks or something." His fellow vocational tech students were impressed by Smith's inspired effort. "Everybody was pretty snowed by it," he recalled. "They thought it was very 'pop.' You know, drawing comic books. And that really got me back into comic books."

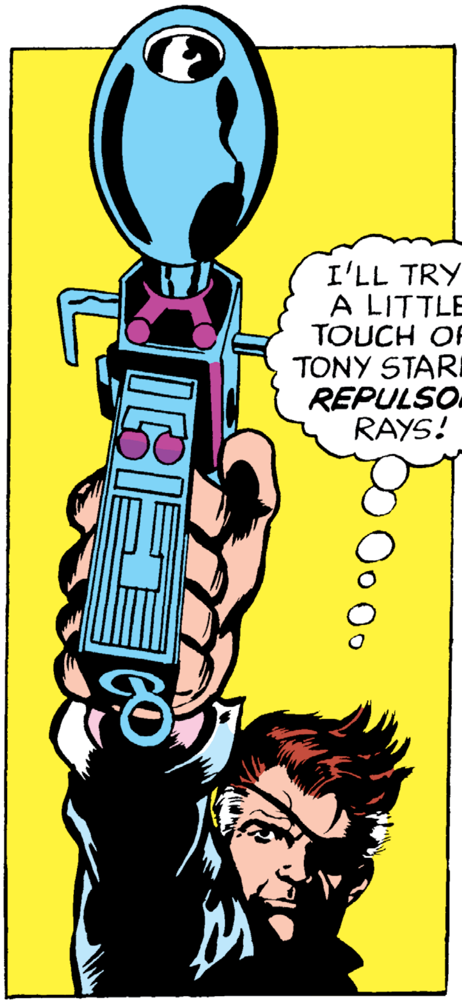
Parkhouse remembered, "Barry's drawing style was pretty embryonic at that time, a kind of hybrid of influences, from Jack Kirby to Ralph Steadman, the political cartoonist who was a visiting lecturer [at East Ham Tech, as well as alumni]. Barry was a very good cartoonist; he had a great line, and a kind of manic energy. Streets ahead of everybody else. Too heated to be a graphic designer. Whereas I was practicing to be cool and collected and [for the senior project] did a lot of book covers of my favorite novels, usually in what they call a muted palette."

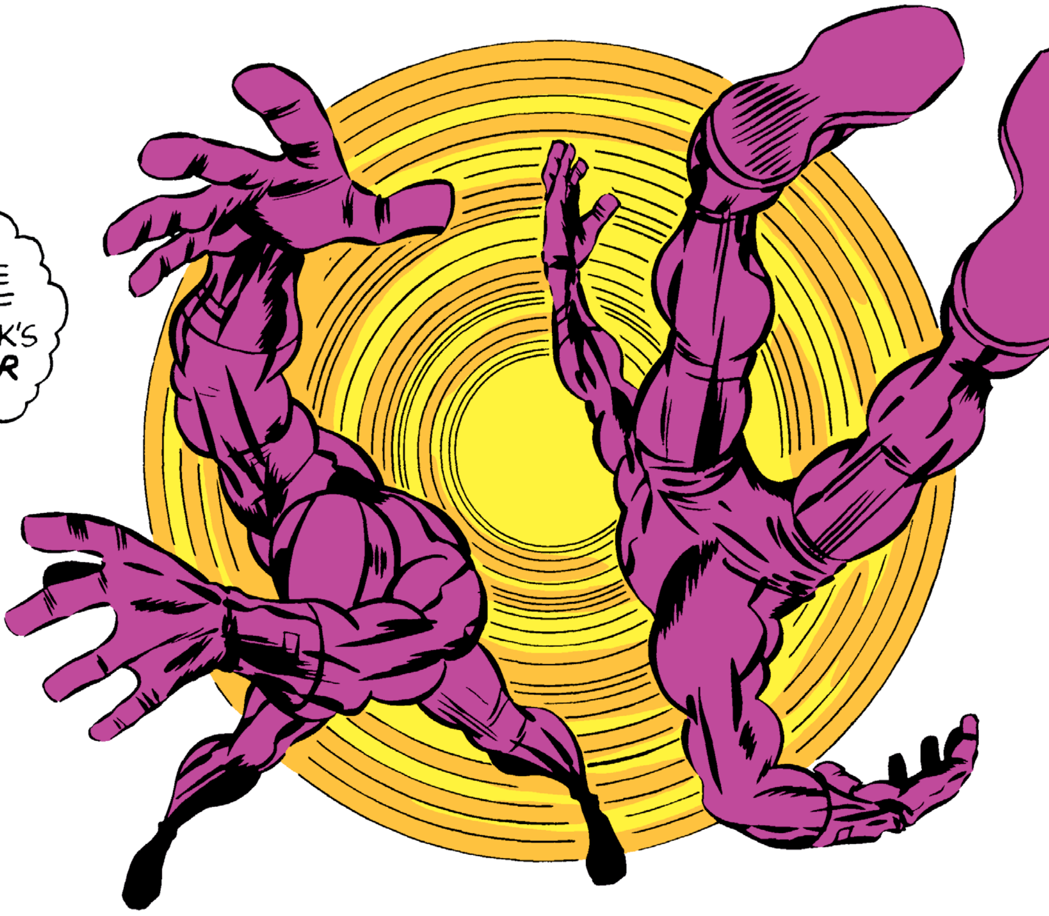
Windsor-Smith confessed in *True Brit* to being under the spell of the *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* cartoonist before the Kirby obsession took over: "In 1967, I was very influenced by Ralph Steadman ... and his influence over me meant that I emulated his style to one degree or another."

Throughout the pair's final stint in technical school, Windsor-Smith and Parkhouse had closely bonded, with the latter often hanging out in the Smith household. "It was like a second home to me," Parkhouse said. "I got to know Barry's family over a period of three years. Most evenings, he and I would sit and listen to music, chat about books, bands, songs, projects ... you know,



BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
ART FROM *X-MEN* #53


I'LL TRY A LITTLE TOUCH OF TONY STARK'S *REPULSOR* RAYS!



the whole works. Barry would often sit with a drawing board on his lap and work while we talked. At home, I would work in the same way while watching TV."

POWER MAN

During those same art-school years, Windsor-Smith dipped his toes into the mainstream comics industry — such as it was in England—as he traversed into West London to where Kirby's material was being packaged for a British audience. He told Paul Deacon in *Arken Sword* #21 in 1987, "When the Power Comics line invented themselves, in a very shoddy birth, I went along and tried to get some work.." He presented to the editors his *Fantastic Four* #25–26 remake and had fortuitously showed up just when they were in need of a pin-up artist for the four-color back covers, as well as a need for some interior work. Windsor-Smith explained, "They chopped up the American stories halfway through and I would do splash pages for the second halves. I remember doing a Don Heck *Iron Man*, which looked exactly like a Don Heck drawing because I'd copied it from one of his panels. So I had to pencil like Don Heck and ink like Dick Ayers. It was great, because I was making money while I was still in art school."

A less enthusiastic Parkhouse went along for the ride to the Odhams office at 64 Long Acre, Central London. "I was involved in a pretty indirect way, because I had no real ambition to work in comics," he said. "I did a few pages of lettering and some very poor character pin-ups. But Barry did quite a few one-off drawings, although I don't remember much of the details. My memory of that experience confirmed my lack of ambition around comics." As Parkhouse remembered "Affable Al," "Big Bold Bart," and other staffers, "the personnel we met were real sad sacks. Time servers really. Strictly nine to five."

One bright presence in the Power Comics editorial crew was "Sunny" Steve Moore, a teen who worked as Odhams' "junior" office boy. Speaking in 2014 to Padraig Ó Méalóid on the Comic Beat website, Moore, who would go on to become a noted comics editor and writer and a mentor to future comics legend Alan Moore, recalled, "It was while working on *Pow!* and *Fantastic* in 1967 that I first met Steve Parkhouse and Barry Smith. They

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH
ART FROM *NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D.* #12

turned up one day as a writer-artist team, trying to sell us a science-fiction strip as a 'Pow Short Story.' It wasn't accepted, but Barry ended up drawing the pin-ups ... I'm not exactly sure when he started, but the early pin-ups were drawn in-house by John Jackson."

All in all, according to one checklist of his work, Windsor-Smith drew 30 color "Power House Pin-Ups" (though none of the inserted mid-story splash pages have, as of yet, been identified, and a few pin-ups may have been drawn by Parkhouse or Jackson), all depicting Marvel super-heroes and villains, some with inspired imagination and graphic panache.

A few years later, at an early British comics convention, a young Alan Moore encountered a "pissed" Windsor-Smith who was still annoyed about a major printing glitch related to one of those pin-ups. Interviewed in *Comic Book Artist* in 2002, Moore said, "I remember buying a color proof of one of Barry's back covers when I was about 15 and getting him to sign it when I met him back then. I thought he was the most glamorous individual I had ever met in my life ... I can't remember if he was actually wearing a panda-skin coat when I met him ... perhaps that's what I've added to my memory ... He had the long golden pre-Raphaelite hair. He was great. He knocked me out. Barry had drawn this picture of the Angel from The X-Men of which I remember he told me it had been printed incorrectly as he meant for the character to be upside-down, swooping with his head downward, but they printed the character right-way up."

The mainstream comics scene in England continued to hold little interest for Smith, who had only a modicum of curiosity in native-born fare that delved into the "fantastic." He told *Ragnarok*, "They weren't all that good, looking back on it, but they were, at the time, the only things you can get in England, except for funny papers and silly little 'comic' comics... the funny comics, you know." These modest publications represented for Windsor-Smith the limited prospects of British working-class drudgery. "Suddenly I was out of college, didn't know what the hell to do," he said. "I wasn't going to join some cruddy studio, like all my friends had done. Doing paste-ups and crap like that."

Nor did the comix counterculture radiate much allure for the teenage artist. Interviewed by Tom Watkins and Craig Dawson for the 1975 New York Comic Art Convention, Windsor-Smith said, "I just had this irresistible urge to draw, not necessarily comics, but something of a fantasy nature. There was an extremely tiny underground fan-fantasy type clique somewhere in West London. It's just such a turn-off, that kind of thing ... Everybody's hairy and needs a bath. Everybody meets in their bedrooms and reads *Doctor Strange* ... and I couldn't get into it."

"I wasn't in the States when [Robert] Crumb was doing his initial work, *Zap*, and all that sort of thing," Windsor-Smith said in The *Comics Journal* #190. "Because I was a creature from the commercial comics, I viewed with suspicion the underground material. I was a wholly different person back in those days. I was pretty uptight. And a friend of mine brought back some black-and-white *Zap*s and stuff like that from the States and he was thrilled to pieces by them. I couldn't comprehend it. Because I was so caught up into what I was doing, my intention to be second only to Jack Kirby or some immature goal like that."

It may be shocking to learn that, despite coming of age in the Age of Aquarius, Windsor-Smith saw no need to "feed his head." He later admitted in *Opus* 1, "I have never used any kind of drugs, hallucinogenic or otherwise, whatsoever. Not because of prudery or even dim-witted legalities, but simply because my consciousness is pretty damned expanded in the first place, thanks anyway."

With school over and Odhams and its Power Comics soon to shutter its doors for good, Windsor-Smith decided to go all in on his goal of securing transatlantic assignments from the "House That Jack Built." He recalled in *Ragnarok* , "I drew up 20 or so pages ... I made up a few stories ... They were huge, gigantic pages of artwork and I sent them over to Marvel, you know, starry-eyed and everything." He later confessed in *Comic Book Artist*, "Marvel was my only interest because of Kirby's work." It was the Marvel Comics Group or bust.

ON THE MARVEL BENCH

Windsor-Smith's plan to get in with the fabled Marvel Bullpen looked like it couldn't fail. The young artist's oversize package of art samples, chockfull of sure-to-be-Stan Lee-pleasing extensions of Kirby art with an array of Marvel characters in motion, could not have arrived at 625 Madison Avenue at a more opportune time. Martin Goodman's outfit was soaring in popularity and threatening market dominance, able to pressure Independent News (sister corporation to Marvel's main rival, DC Comics) to handle more Marvel titles per month, instantly expanding the line by a third, and spinning off numerous characters into solo books. Plus, parent company

YOU WILL NOT BE SORRY IN YOUR OLD AGE, MR. STARK.

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH ART
AVENGERS #47

Magazine Management was on its way to being purchased by merger-hungry Perfect Film, just as Marvel was selling a peak number of issues per year — 50 million copies! — and the future shined bright. Thus, in 1968, the House of Ideas was suddenly in need of fresh talent to fill its increasing number of four-color pages.

Also in Windsor-Smith's package was written material by Parkhouse, as the pitch to Marvel was to take the two on as a set. The scheme was simple, Parkhouse explained: "We thought, 'Why not market ourselves as a writer/artist team?' That was until we got a response from Stan Lee's office. I'm not sure if it was from Stan Lee himself. We'd sent a package of stuff, anyhow, and the response was, 'If you're ever in New York, drop into the Bullpen and say hello.' Barry saw that as an invitation, but I didn't. I thought his ambition had skewed his judgment."

The Marvel representative who, in fact, made the cordial reply was Lee assistant Linda Fite, who had initially delivered Windsor-Smith and Parkhouse's samples to the writer/editor's attention. One aspect of the Sweet Briar College grad's job was to sort through the editor's mail. "I knew Stan would be interested, especially because his wife, Joan, was British," Fite said. "So, directed thus by Stan, I wrote the letter to Barry and Steve, and signed my own name."

Despite Windsor-Smith's sudden and resolute decision to fly across the Atlantic, show up unannounced on Marvel's threshold, and gather up assignments as yet unoffered, Parkhouse was increasingly ambivalent about the caper. "When I mentioned it to my parents, they were skeptical, to say the least," he said, "and I found myself in a dilemma. When I talked to Barry about my misgivings, he was understandably despondent — but I guessed he was determined to go, even by himself and get the lie of the land. Remember, we were only 18 and 19 at the time. We had very limited professional experience. I'd only left Britain once before on a school trip and I don't think Barry had even left the London area much before."

Finally, Parkhouse caved before his friend's unrelenting tenacity, though not without doubts. "I was extremely nervous about the whole endeavor," he said. "But, in his inimitable way, Barry persuaded me to go along. We borrowed the airfare from his mom (bless her heart) and started to make arrangements. When my father found out, he went apeshit. It created a huge rift between us, which never really healed. Back in those days, men were very proud — and the idea of borrowing money from a virtual stranger was just not done. He said some pretty cruel things, which he later regretted, but the damage had been done. When the time came to leave, I was under a cloud. Not helped by the fact that I threw up in the airplane on the descent to Kennedy. Not an auspicious beginning."

It was roughly mid-May 1968 when the pair landed at JFK airport, each granted a two-week visitor's visa, and dropped off by taxi in midtown Manhattan. As Windsor-Smith later put it in *Comic Book Artist* #2, "My pal and me were on Marvel's doorstep in the blink of an eye." Windsor-Smith recalled the exotic allure that they brought to the Bullpen. "Stan was quite enamored of both Steve and I," he said in *Arken Sword* #21. "We sort of had The Beatles backing us, because the Americans just loved them and anything that was British

… Carnaby Street and all that rubbish. I was very longhaired, and we had these strange accents that nobody could understand. We had to constantly repeat ourselves when we talked to Sol Brodsky or Marie Severin. In fact, Marie, who's a great cartoonist, used to do cartoons of Steve and I trying to talk to people and our speech balloons had all the words jumbled up. A cartooned Marie says, 'Good morning, Steve,' and a cartooned Steve replies, 'Gwadm papfu.'"

"Finding yourself in Manhattan after Forest Gate really expands the mind," Parkhouse said. "We'd only been there a few days when we were invited to be in a porn movie by some guy on the street. We must have looked the part: young, longhaired, looking like band members … It was clearly a scam, probably somebody was lying in wait to steal our money and clothes, so we declined in a very polite British manner and the guy got really aggressive. I think we dodged a bullet there. I thought it was a little unnecessary! Added to this alien environment was the seemingly daunting task of getting some work. I'm not sure how serious I was about breaking into U.S. comics. New York itself was unsettling enough, but Barry seemed more insulated than I was. I think at some point I just abandoned the idea of resistance and let the flow take me where it wanted."

That flow washed up at 625 Madison Avenue, where Parkhouse scored himself a gig. As he wrote in a 1990 letter to *The Comics Journal*, "For a few months in 1968, I worked as a sub-editor at Marvel … where I met and worked with all the Marvel staffers on a day-to-day basis … Part of my job was to make photocopies of the scripts [Lee] wrote on a normal typewriter in his office." In the course of his various duties, Parkhouse met comics luminaries Jim Steranko, Neal Adams, and even Jack Kirby. "Working in the Bullpen was a major plus," he said. "I felt much more at home in that environment. I was inclined to be more gregarious than Barry and so I set about learning the ropes of production. People seemed to like my English accent, so I was given the job of answering the phone and meeting people in reception. I also answered readers' mail and put together the letter column. During that time, I got to know lovely Linda Fite — a true heroine — plus some Bullpen stalwarts, like Marie Severin, Herb Trimpe, Sol Brodsky, and 'The Man,' himself, of course: Stan Lee. Stan was always very, very kind to me. He didn't have to be, but he was. I'll always be grateful for his patience and his attentiveness. He was instrumental in making the whole trip worthwhile."

Both Parkhouse and Windsor-Smith recall encountering Kirby: "I met Jack only once and it was during that first year," Windsor-Smith said. "It's an old cliché, I know, but I was really surprised that I, at 18 years, was taller than The King. I had envisioned him as a physical giant as well as a creative one. He was a lovely man, thoughtful and considerate, and although he could obviously see that I was imitating his style, in my own less than skillful way, he was not the least put out by it and simply said, 'You've got some strong design here, Stan likes that.' I have always regretted not knowing Jack better."

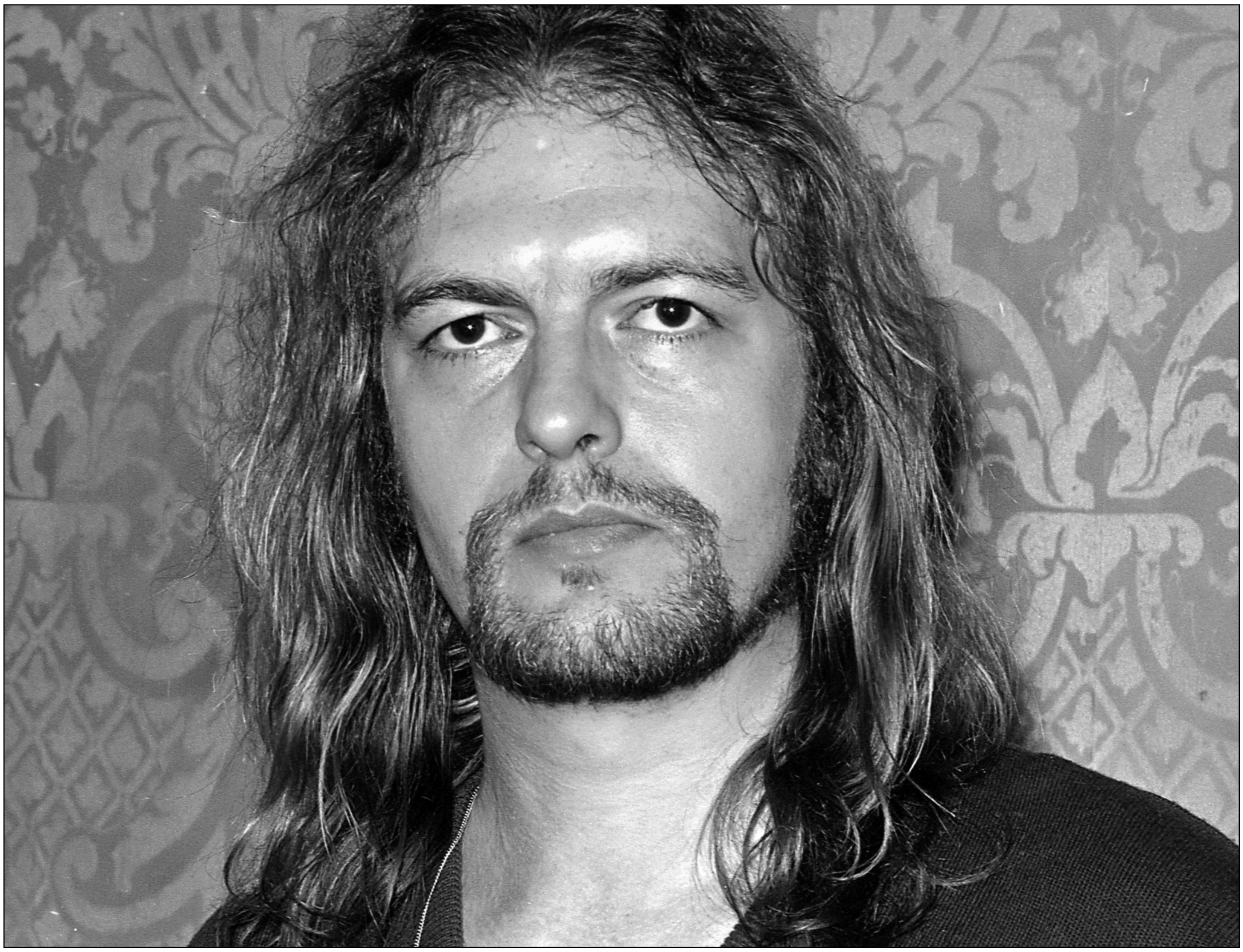
Parkhouse remembered, "We met Jack Kirby quite early on [when] he was delivering penciled artwork, and we spent some time in reception talking to him. He was a little dry but was interested in us and our welfare. He had a lot on his plate. I used to Xerox his pencils, vast reams of them, whole books at a time. It was like a lesson in commercial art. Strangely delicate at times, especially Tales of Asgard, which I was really happy to see."

Windsor-Smith said in *Comic Book Artist*, "The offices were no bigger than an average New York City apartment. Areas were sectioned off — the Bullpen itself could hold four people sort-of comfortably, with liberal deodorant use. Stan had the only office with a door. The atmosphere was quite merry most of the time. Marie was a constant source of laughs with her wonderful cartoons of all of us."

After the costly error of spending their first night in a posh five-star hotel, "Next day we schlepped around and found a cheaper place," Parkhouse told me. They found cheap lodging at the seedy Hotel Madison, which happened to be around the corner from Fite's apartment. "We called it a 'hotel,'" Parkhouse explained, "but it was basically a flophouse on Madison Avenue. A dismal little pit of a place, so far removed from our adolescent fantasies, and yet within walking distance of Marvel HQ."

In that grungy environment, their room was broken into, and Windsor-Smith was robbed. "Someone ripped off Barry's leather jacket right off his bed," Linda Fite said, "so they moved into my place and slept on the floor." Parkhouse recalled that, as two vagabonds living out of their suitcases, "We were very largely protected, mostly by Linda herself, and her constant generosity. I think we must have triggered some kind of maternal instinct in her — but we would have been seriously at sea without her."

The apartment Fite shared with her friend Pam



was at 125 E. 27th Street, between Park and Lexington avenues, a half-hour's stroll from the House of Ideas. "Pam and I both had jobs out in Manhattan —she went downtown, I went uptown," she told me, "and we'd come home and the boys seemed to have not moved since we left the house in the morning! They were so … mopey! Barry would play my guitar, and they'd scrounge around for food, chat, go out to buy cigs, come back. Steve was quieter than Barry, and maybe more thoughtful …? After what seemed like a long time of not having any privacy, we shifted them up to another bunch of Sweet Briar girls."

Despite not obtaining the requisite working permit from U.S. immigration officials (or asking the government agency for visa extensions), Windsor-Smith and Parkhouse achieved their primary objective and began receiving assignments from Marvel, as artist and writer, respectively. *The X-Men* #53 [Feb. '69] was Windsor-Smith's first job and Parkhouse's scripting debut was a Ka-Zar tale in *Marvel Super-Heroes* #19 (Mar. '69) behind a Windsor-Smith cover of the jungle hero. The two next teamed up for "There He Is! Here Comes the Outcast," a 10-page Western adventure that wouldn't see print until almost two years later, in *Western Gunfighters* #4 [Feb. '71]. And their final collaboration for Marvel appeared in *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.IE.L.D.* #12, with "Hell Hath No Fury," an espionage tale with an antagonist that Parkhouse named after Brit comics fan Bob Rickard.

Windsor-Smith's arrival and inaugural effort was hyped in the Marvel Bullpen Bulletins page for titles dated March 1969, in Stan Lee's sunny voice:

> DIDJA KNOW? Everybody's talking about Bashful BARRY SMITH, the surprising new staffer we just imported from England! Barry's artwork is just not to be believed! This young, long-haired, titanically talented Britisher has a

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH, 1981.
PHOTO BY JAMES MICHAEL CATRON

> style which combines the pulse-pounding power of JACK (King) KIRBY with the off-beat improvisations of Jaunty JIM STERANKO! You gotta see it to believe it! And see it you will, in X-MEN #53 and an upcoming issue of SHIELD! Let us know which other strips you'd like him to tackle, 'cause we're anxious to see how your opinions compare with ours!

("Bashful" Barry's partner also got his own in-house nickname — "Stupifyin' Steve Parkhouse" — in the following month's Bulletins page, which additionally described him as "destined to be a Marvel staffer — and [he] writes as smashing a bit of superhero skullduggery as you could wanna read! Steve's youthful, toothful, and a heckuva writer ...")

Windsor-Smith's streak of one-shot assignments was broken with his three-issue run on *Daredevil* (#50–52, Mar.–May 1969), where his storytelling skills improved markedly despite his style remaining steeped in imitation Kirby, with a few Steranko flourishes. During this stint, the artist plotted a clever teaming of Daredevil with the Black Panther, a nice contrast of all-red and all-black costumed characters, and introduced flamboyant villain Starr Saxon. [This *Daredevil* run will appear in the second volume of *Barry Windsor-Smith at Marvel*.]

At the tender age of age 19, Windsor-Smith was one of the youngest freelance artists to break into the comics industry. While no doubt a promising and quickly improving artist, his early efforts were raw, and critical reception from readers was mixed and sometimes cruel. "If someone does not say it," wrote David O'Connor in a letter printed in *Daredevil* #54, "it looks like it's up to me. Well, here goes: Barry Smith is the worst artist the Bullpen has!!"

Another, from Janet Blair, panned Windsor-Smith's *X-Men* effort: "I never heard of Barry Smith before and I hope I don't hear of him again." In reply, the anonymous letter column's curator came to the young man's defense: "Bashful Barry Smith ... produced that one and only *X-Men* issue under the worst of possible circumstances, is since doing much better work on *The Avengers* ... and we have other big things in store for him as his penciling prowess grows by leaps and bounds." [*The X-Men* #58, July '69]

Bullpen regular Roy Thomas, who was then assisting Lee on the managerial end, scripted most of Windsor-Smith's Marvel work. "[Smith] had a lot of rough edges anyway," Thomas said in *Comic Book Artist* #2. "My God, the amount of letters we got complaining about the *X-Men* issue he drew on park benches!"

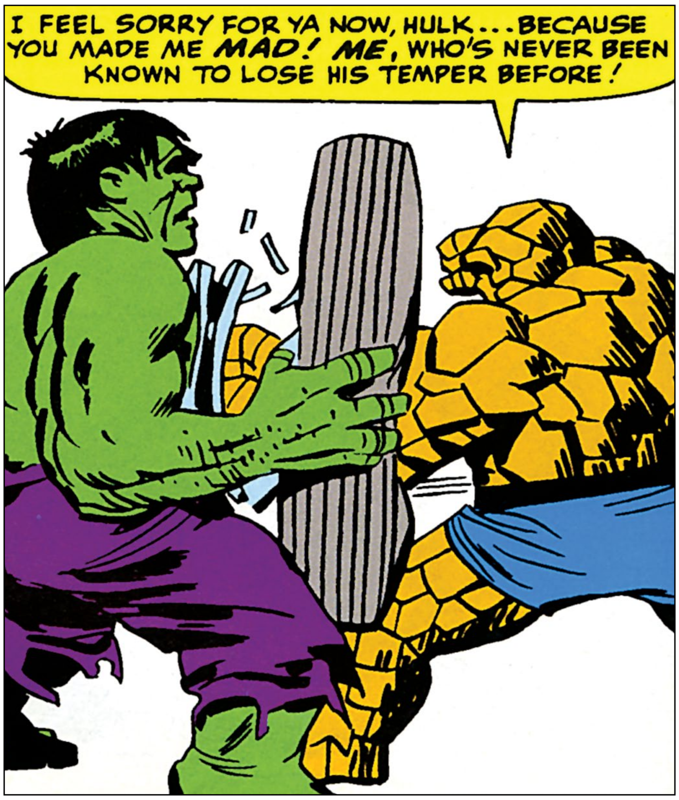
Asked whether the "park bench" story was apocryphal, Parkhouse said, "I suspect that if Barry had actually done any drawing on a park bench, he would have been surrounded by curious onlookers or moved on by the cops. I never saw him do that, but he did work in some very challenging circumstances."

Simply living in New York City at that time was "terrifying, to be frank," Windsor-Smith said in *Comic Book Artist*. "The summer of '68 was a time of considerable unrest in many urban areas in the States. We saw homeless people lying in the street unaided, we saw policemen in riot gear beating up groups of Black kids. A building we stayed at for a few days was blown to bits a short while after we left because there was an illicit bomb factory in the basement. And, yes, we lived out of suitcases — sometimes, without money, we went without food or water for days in stifling 90 degrees-and-up heat."

Parkhouse concurred: "We got to see many aspects of the city, very few of which I actually liked. People tell me that New York has changed dramatically since the '60s, but my lasting impression is of grime, heat, pressure, police sirens, armed police, jaw-dropping buildings and a scale of living that seemed anti-human. We also met some wonderful people who held on to their humanity with true warmth and dignity."

Plus, the 1968 bullpen was a lively environment in which to work. Lee's secretary at the time, Robin Green, wrote in a *Rolling Stone* cover feature published a few years later, "The people at Marvel are paid to be professional children and the atmosphere around the office is correspondingly chaotic, moody, riotously emotional. Unlike most Madison Avenue offices, Marvel makes no attempt at decorum. I was always very grateful for that. You could dress the way you wanted to, say anything you wanted to, and you even worked because you wanted to because there was very little supervision" ("Face Front! Clap Your Hands! You're on the Winning Team," Robin Green, *Rolling Stone* #92, Sept. 16, 1971).

Smith and Parkhouse did get out of the city on at least one occasion, taking the Penn Central rail line up the Hudson River. According to Parkhouse, "We went up to Westchester for a barbecue. I think it was Robin Green's family who invited us ... Standing in the train station, we could hear the sound of crickets — so that


I FEEL SORRY FOR YA NOW, HULK...BECAUSE YOU MADE ME MAD! ME, WHO'S NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO LOSE HIS TEMPER BEFORE!

ART BY WINDSOR-SMITH'S INITIAL ROLE MODEL, JACK KIRBY, FROM *FANTASTIC FOUR* #25.

would have been mid-summer."

The seasons turned for the two, and Parkhouse said, "We stayed at the Madison until winter arrived. Icy winds and snow on the ground. All the way through these perambulations, we were being looked after by Linda and her various pals. Making sure we ate properly and so forth."

DEPORTATION

The grim reality of the big city proved no match for Windsor-Smith's unrelenting determination, even when he was producing that initial *X-Men story*. Interviewed by Paul Grant in *Wizard* in 1993: "I got it done pretty fast, a couple of pages a day, sitting in some grungy hotel room on 26th Street," he said, "with this alien life going on around me, policemen with guns, and riots. I didn't really realize that that was a necessity. I was too [new] to the business, but I had this need to make good. I didn't want to go back to England as an 18-year-old with no prospects. It was enormously important to me. So I stuck with it and made it stick."

In their fifth month on American soil, Windsor-Smith and Parkhouse's tourist visas had long ago expired, making them illegal aliens. Marvel assignments were not steady and, according to Parkhouse, they "crashed in various apartments belonging to friends of friend." After overstaying their welcome with the Sweet Briar ladies network, they had scraped together enough income to return to decrepit Hotel Madison. But as winter loomed, paying work and sustenance were becoming scarce.

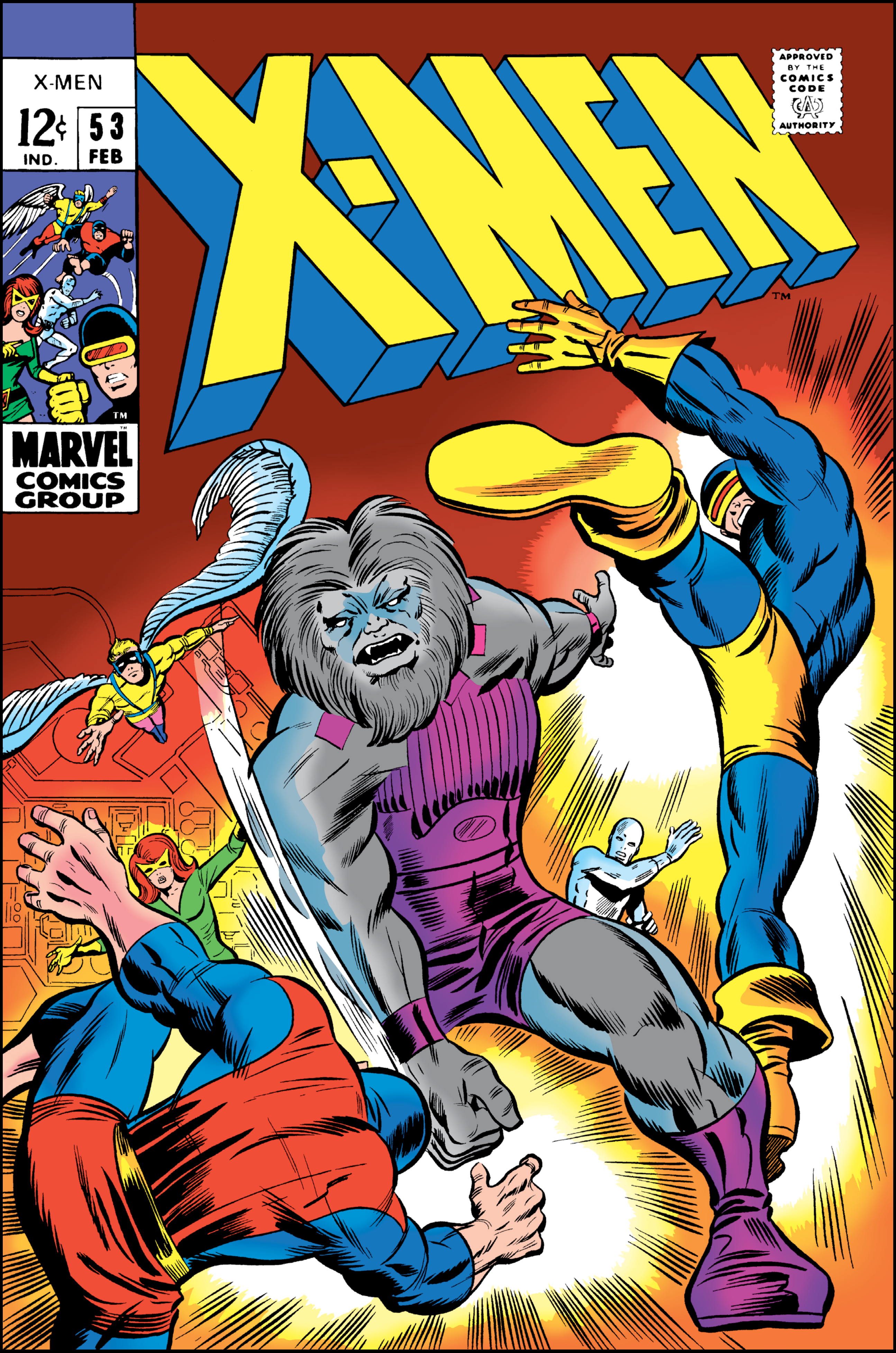
Parkhouse explained. "I was informed by Marvel's lawyer that I had to present myself to the Immigration authorities in preparation for 'voluntary departure.' I was taken into an office, fingerprinted, and informed that I could not apply for re-entry into the U.S. until a period of five years had passed. They stamped my passport and let me go. There were no handcuffs involved, no police sirens — just a couple of very matter-of-fact Black ladies who were probably doing this every hour of the day. They were good at their job."

Smith elaborated about his end in *Wizard* #28: "The immigration authorities knew I was up to something," he said. "They kept sending me these forms asking, 'Are you working?' And I'd say, 'No!' And they'd say, 'How are you supporting yourself?' So I'd lie and say, 'Mum sent me a few quid.' That worked for a while, but they kinda twigged what I was up to, so they threatened me with deportation. If I got deported, I couldn't return within a 10-year period, so that was a scary thing. There was talk about me not so much given plane tickets as being sent out on some Air Force jet and given a parachute as they passed over the British Isles."

Near the end of the year, five months into their U.S. visit, the axe dropped, and Windsor-Smith and Parkhouse were sent back across the pond. "By late '68," Parkhouse admitted, "I was more than ready to go home. The winter winds were biting, and my clothes were thin. Essentially, we were deported, having overstayed our welcome. Marvel had done what they could to extend our stay, but the Immigration Department had no respect for budding artists and writers."

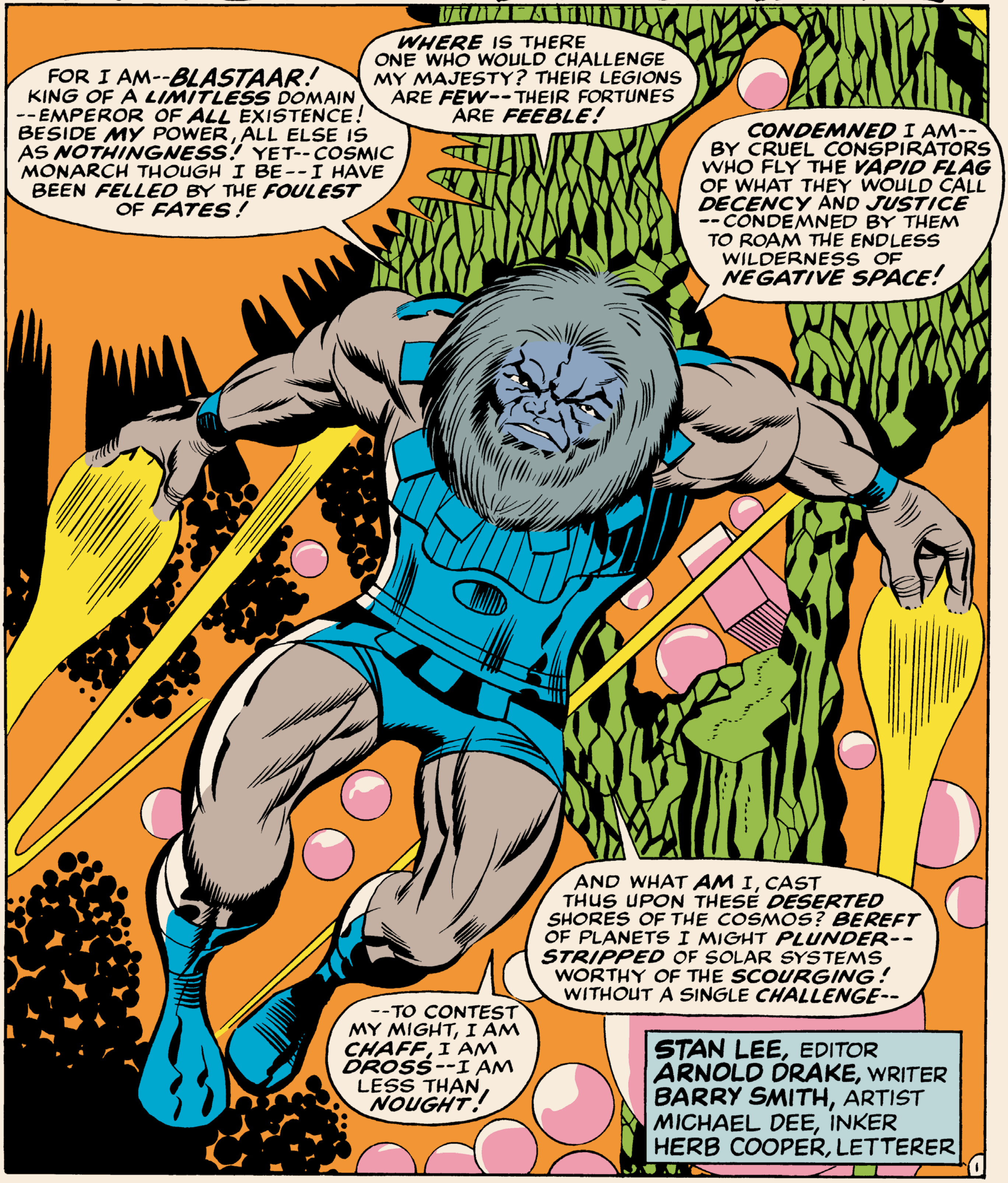
However disappointed to be forced back home, Windsor-Smith still had hope that he would continue to be an asset to the Marvel bullpen. "By that time," Windsor-Smith said in *Wizard* #28, "I think I had done three issues of *Daredevil*, which was an ongoing series, which I was enjoying immensely. Again, very badly drawn, but I think I was making up a good story and I think that's what made them want to keep me."

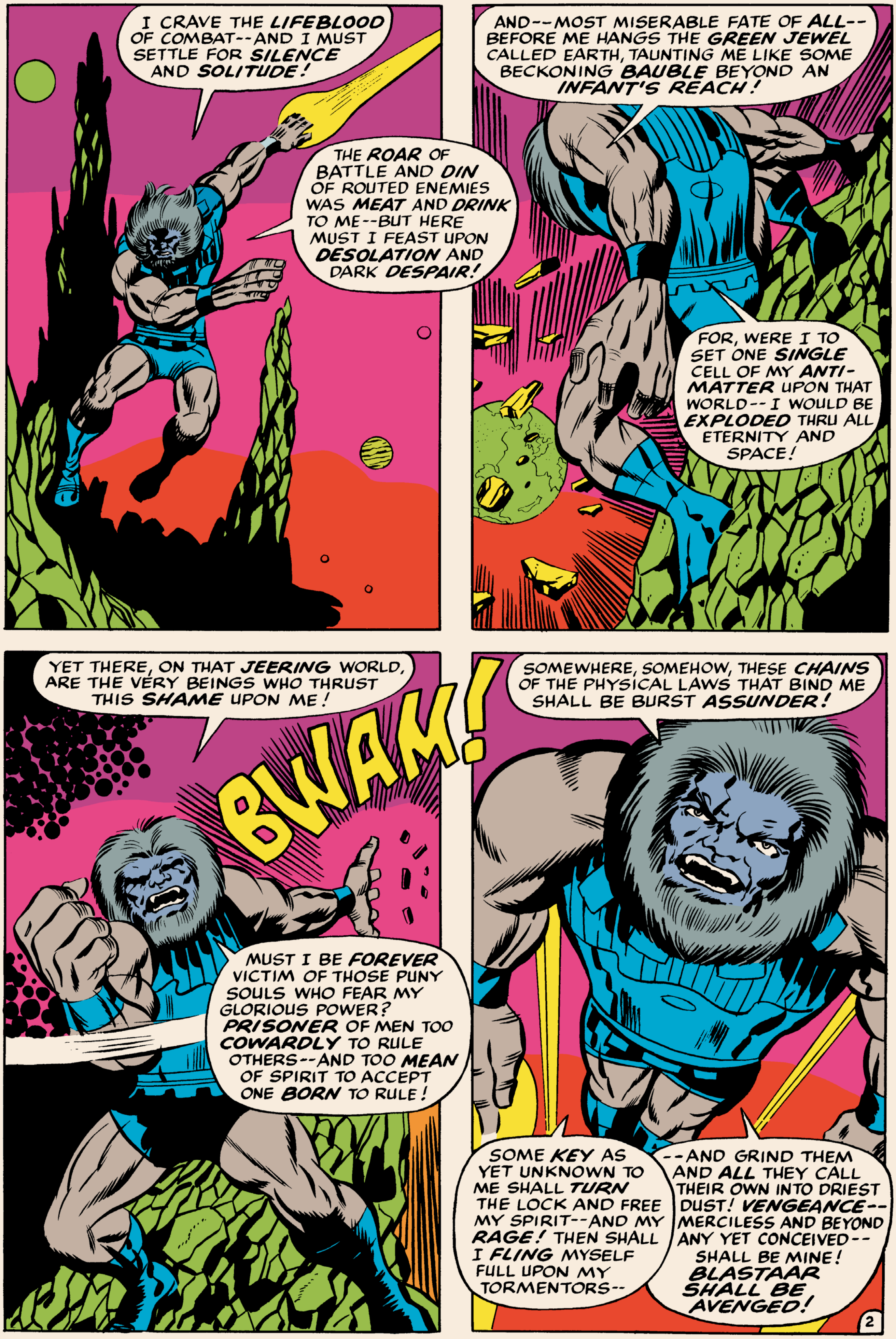
To Be Continued in Marvel Creator Collection: Barry Windsor-Smith at Marvel *Vol. 2*

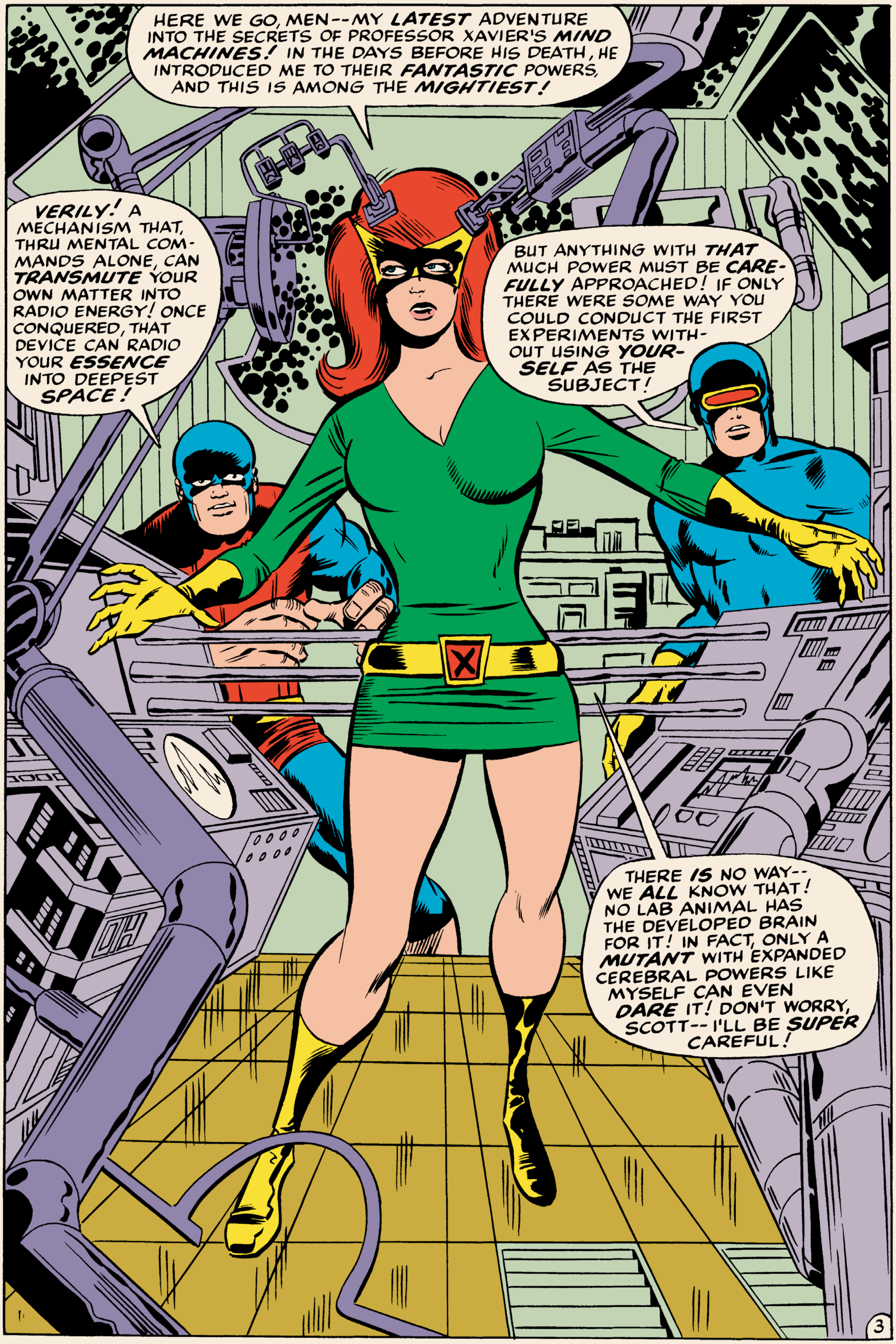

X-MEN
12¢
IND.
53
FEB
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
X-MEN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

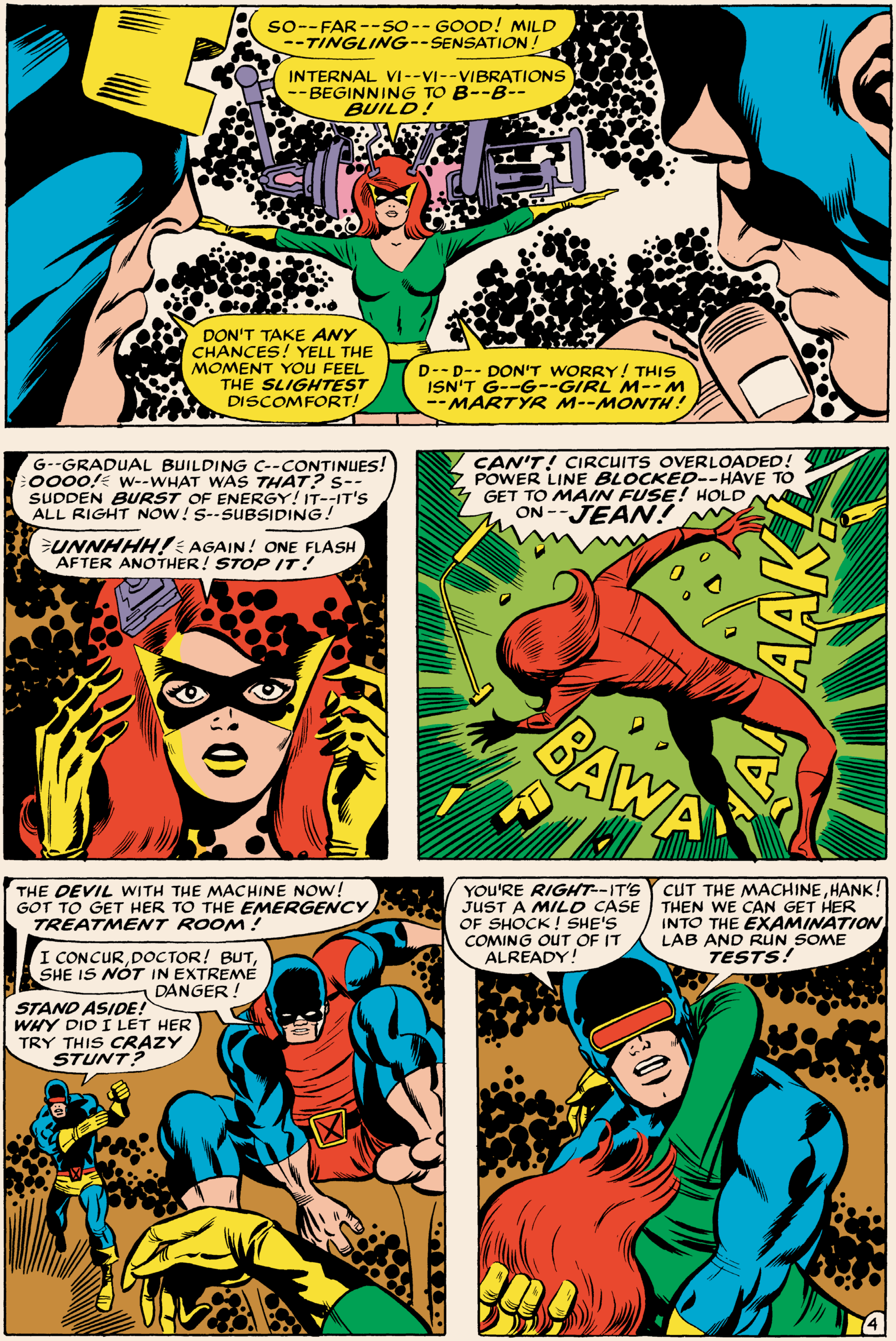
X-MEN! THE MOST UNUSUAL FIGHTING TEAM OF ALL TIME!™

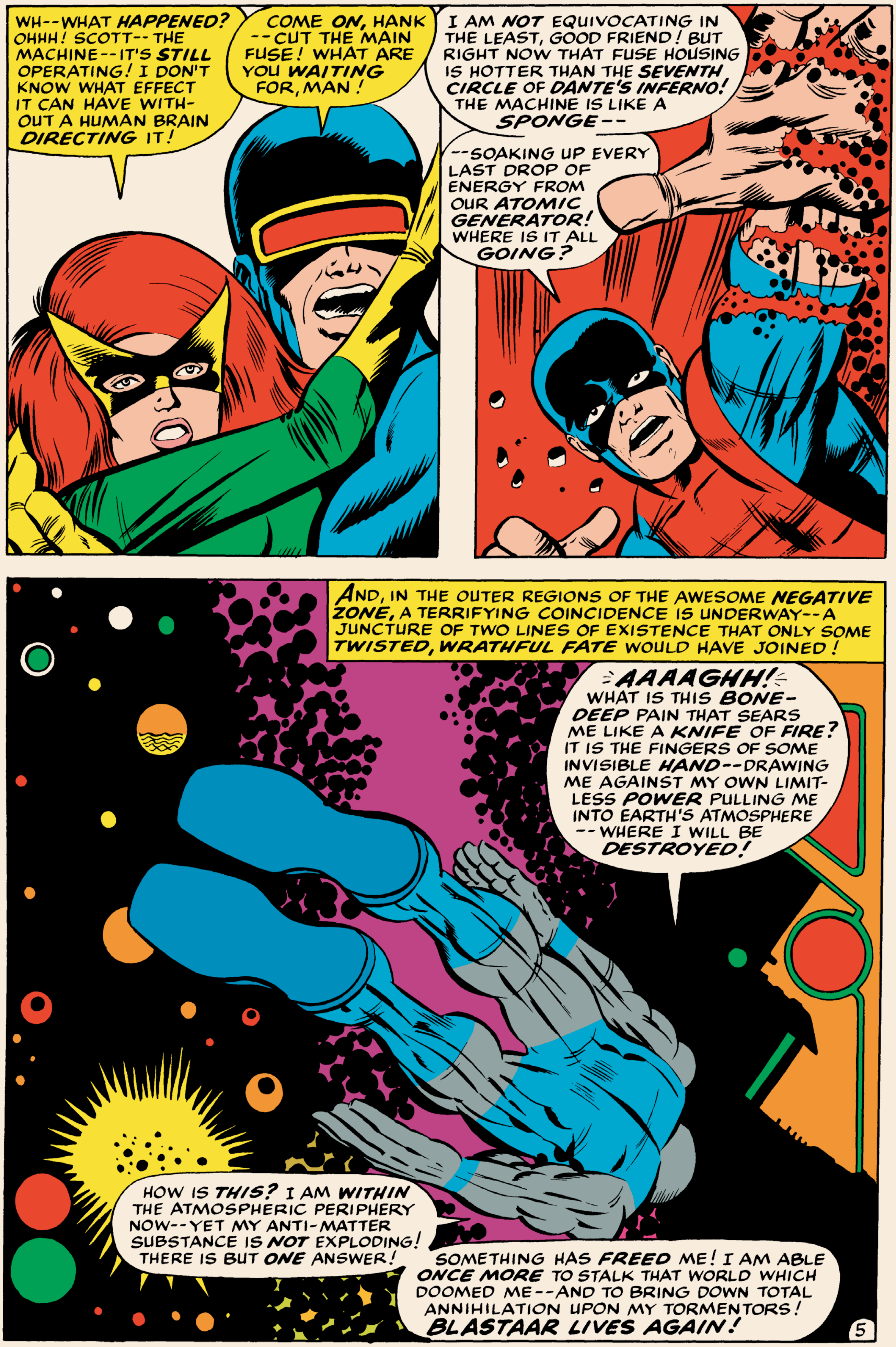
"THE RAGE OF BLASTAAR!"

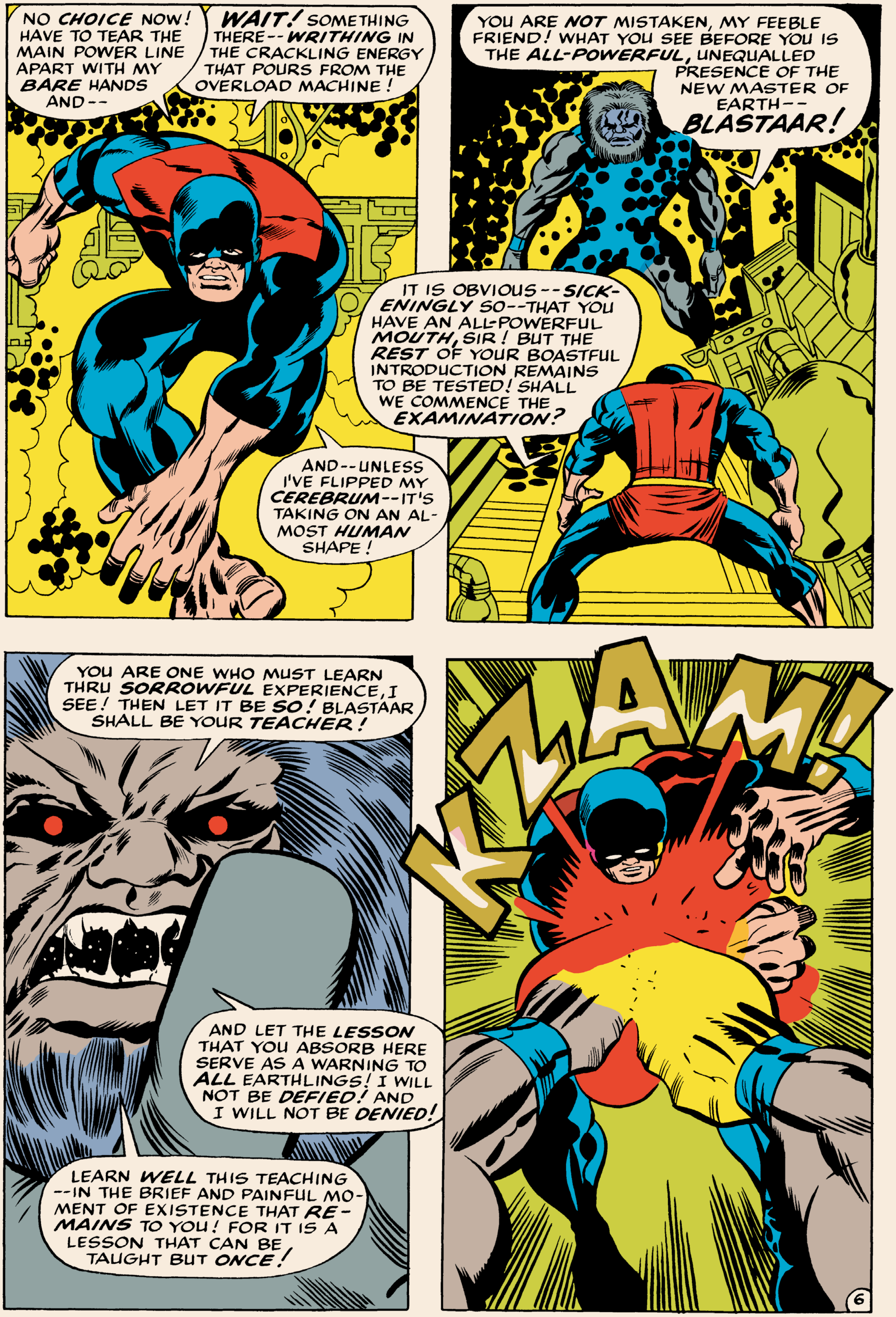

FOR I AM--BLASTAAR! KING OF A LIMITLESS DOMAIN --EMPEROR OF ALL EXISTENCE! BESIDE MY POWER, ALL ELSE IS AS NOTHINGNESS! YET--COSMIC MONARCH THOUGH I BE--I HAVE BEEN FELLED BY THE FOULEST OF FATES!
WHERE IS THERE ONE WHO WOULD CHALLENGE MY MAJESTY? THEIR LEGIONS ARE FEW--THEIR FORTUNES ARE FEEBLE!
CONDEMNED I AM--BY CRUEL CONSPIRATORS WHO FLY THE VAPID FLAG OF WHAT THEY WOULD CALL DECENCY AND JUSTICE--CONDEMNED BY THEM TO ROAM THE ENDLESS WILDERNESS OF NEGATIVE SPACE!
AND WHAT AM I, CAST THUS UPON THESE DESERTED SHORES OF THE COSMOS? BEREFT OF PLANETS I MIGHT PLUNDER--STRIPPED OF SOLAR SYSTEMS WORTHY OF THE SCOURGING! WITHOUT A SINGLE CHALLENGE--
--TO CONTEST MY MIGHT, I AM CHAFF, I AM DROSS--I AM LESS THAN NOUGHT!
STAN LEE, EDITOR
ARNOLD DRAKE, WRITER
BARRY SMITH, ARTIST
MICHAEL DEE, INKER
HERB COOPER, LETTERER
1

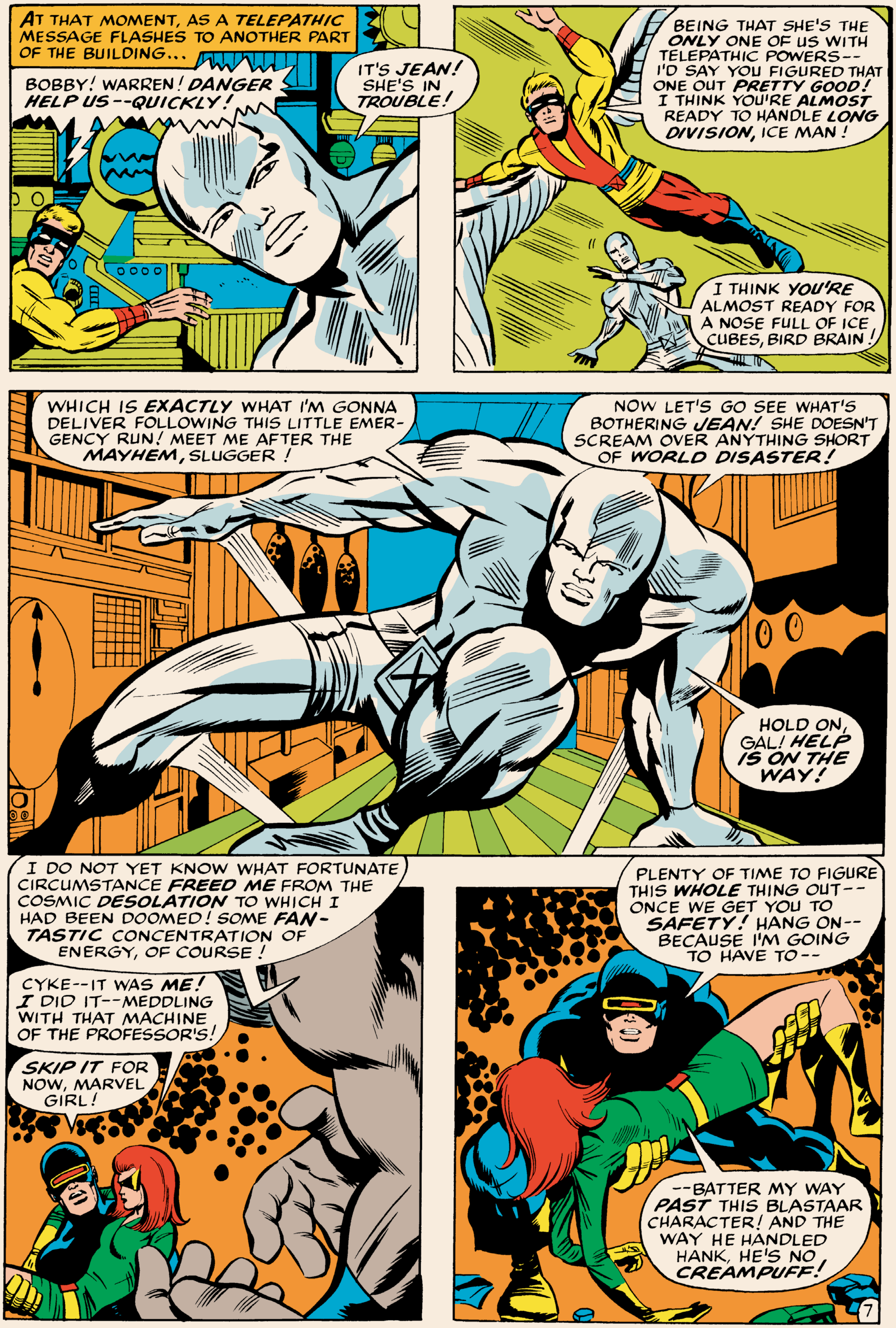

I CRAVE THE LIFEBLOOD OF COMBAT--AND I MUST SETTLE FOR SILENCE AND SOLITUDE!
THE ROAR OF BATTLE AND DIN OF ROUTED ENEMIES WAS MEAT AND DRINK TO ME--BUT HERE MUST I FEAST UPON DESOLATION AND DARK DESPAIR!
AND--MOST MISERABLE FATE OF ALL--BEFORE ME HANGS THE GREEN JEWEL CALLED EARTH, TAUNTING ME LIKE SOME BECKONING BAUBLE BEYOND AN INFANT'S REACH!
FOR, WERE I TO SET ONE SINGLE CELL OF MY ANTI-MATTER UPON THAT WORLD--I WOULD BE EXPLODED THRU ALL ETERNITY AND SPACE!
YET THERE, ON THAT JEERING WORLD, ARE THE VERY BEINGS WHO THRUST THIS SHAME UPON ME!
BWAM!
MUST I BE FOREVER VICTIM OF THOSE PUNY SOULS WHO FEAR MY GLORIOUS POWER? PRISONER OF MEN TOO COWARDLY TO RULE OTHERS--AND TOO MEAN OF SPIRIT TO ACCEPT ONE BORN TO RULE!
SOMEWHERE, SOMEHOW, THESE CHAINS OF THE PHYSICAL LAWS THAT BIND ME SHALL BE BURST ASSUNDER!
SOME KEY AS YET UNKNOWN TO ME SHALL TURN THE LOCK AND FREE MY SPIRIT--AND MY RAGE! THEN SHALL I FLING MYSELF FULL UPON MY TORMENTORS--
--AND GRIND THEM AND ALL THEY CALL THEIR OWN INTO DRIEST DUST! VENGEANCE--MERCILESS AND BEYOND ANY YET CONCEIVED--SHALL BE MINE! BLASTAAR SHALL BE AVENGED!
2

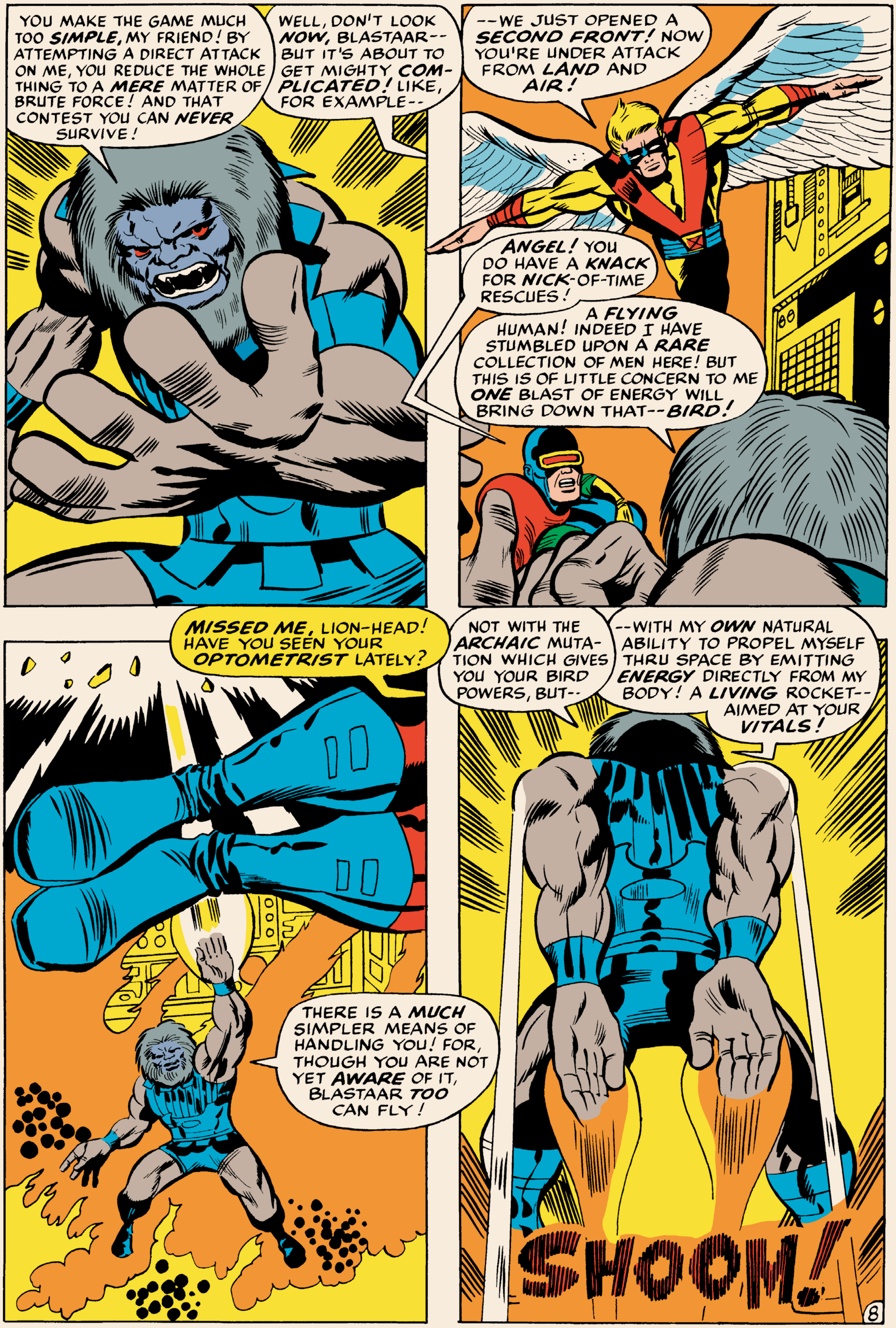

HERE WE GO, MEN--MY LATEST ADVENTURE INTO THE SECRETS OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S MIND MACHINES! IN THE DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH, HE INTRODUCED ME TO THEIR FANTASTIC POWERS, AND THIS IS AMONG THE MIGHTIEST!
VERILY! A MECHANISM THAT, THRU MENTAL COMMANDS ALONE, CAN TRANSMUTE YOUR OWN MATTER INTO RADIO ENERGY! ONCE CONQUERED, THAT DEVICE CAN RADIO YOUR ESSENCE INTO DEEPEST SPACE!
BUT ANYTHING WITH THAT MUCH POWER MUST BE CAREFULLY APPROACHED! IF ONLY THERE WERE SOME WAY YOU COULD CONDUCT THE FIRST EXPERIMENTS WITHOUT USING YOURSELF AS THE SUBJECT!
THERE IS NO WAY-- WE ALL KNOW THAT! NO LAB ANIMAL HAS THE DEVELOPED BRAIN FOR IT! IN FACT, ONLY A MUTANT WITH EXPANDED CEREBRAL POWERS LIKE MYSELF CAN EVEN DARE IT! DON'T WORRY, SCOTT--I'LL BE SUPER CAREFUL!
3

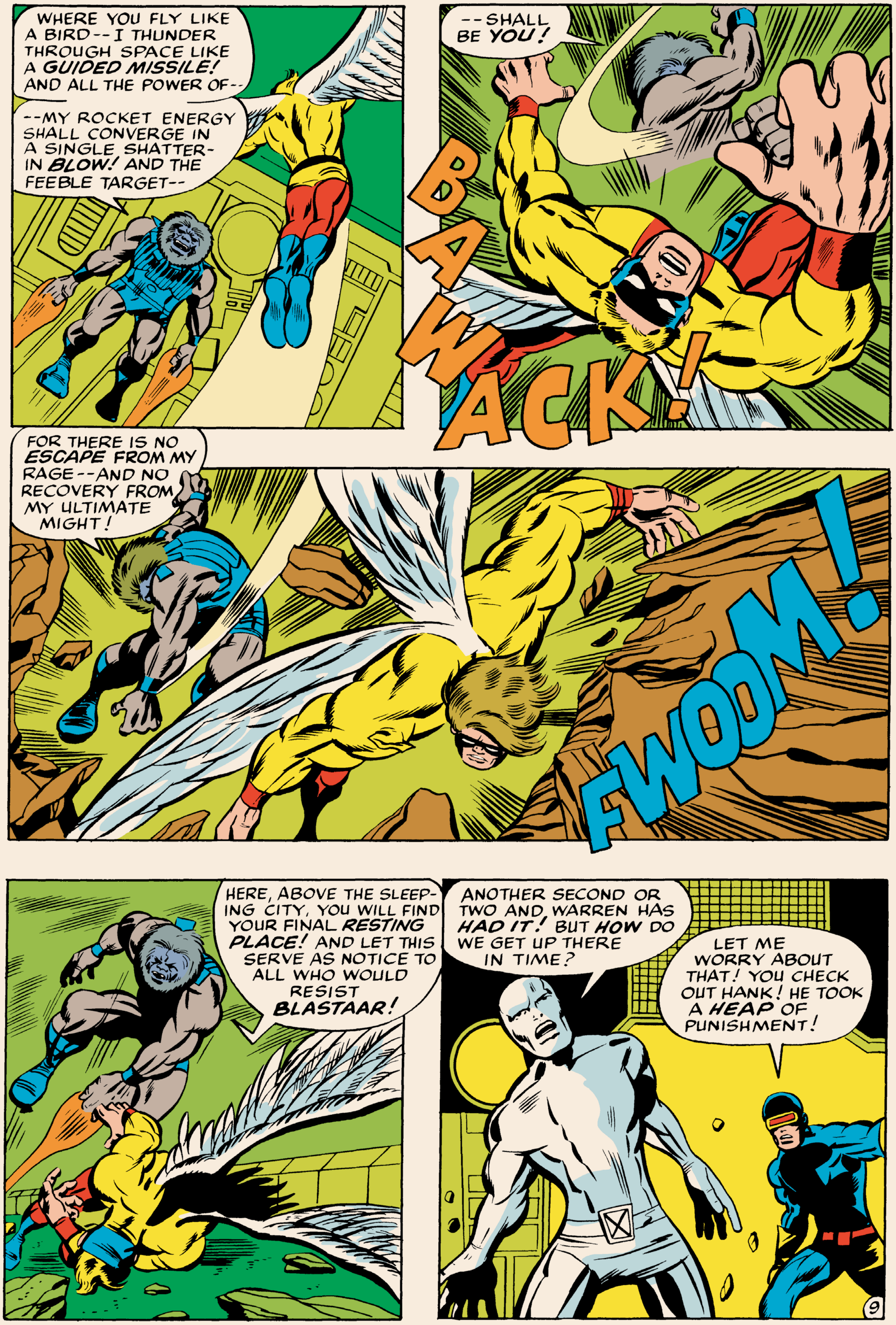

SO--FAR--SO--GOOD! MILD --TINGLING--SENSATION!
INTERNAL VI--VI--VIBRATIONS --BEGINNING TO B--B-- BUILD!
DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES! YELL THE MOMENT YOU FEEL THE SLIGHTEST DISCOMFORT!
D--D-- DON'T WORRY! THIS ISN'T G--G--GIRL M--M --MARTYR M--MONTH!
G--GRADUAL BUILDING C--CONTINUES! OOOO! W--WHAT WAS THAT? S--SUDDEN BURST OF ENERGY! IT--IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW! S--SUBSIDING!
UNNHHH! AGAIN! ONE FLASH AFTER ANOTHER! STOP IT!
CAN'T! CIRCUITS OVERLOADED! POWER LINE BLOCKED--HAVE TO GET TO MAIN FUSE! HOLD ON--JEAN!
KAA-BAWAAAAK!
THE DEVIL WITH THE MACHINE NOW! GOT TO GET HER TO THE EMERGENCY TREATMENT ROOM!
I CONCUR, DOCTOR! BUT, SHE IS NOT IN EXTREME DANGER!
STAND ASIDE! WHY DID I LET HER TRY THIS CRAZY STUNT?
YOU'RE RIGHT--IT'S JUST A MILD CASE OF SHOCK! SHE'S COMING OUT OF IT ALREADY!
CUT THE MACHINE, HANK! THEN WE CAN GET HER INTO THE EXAMINATION LAB AND RUN SOME TESTS!
4

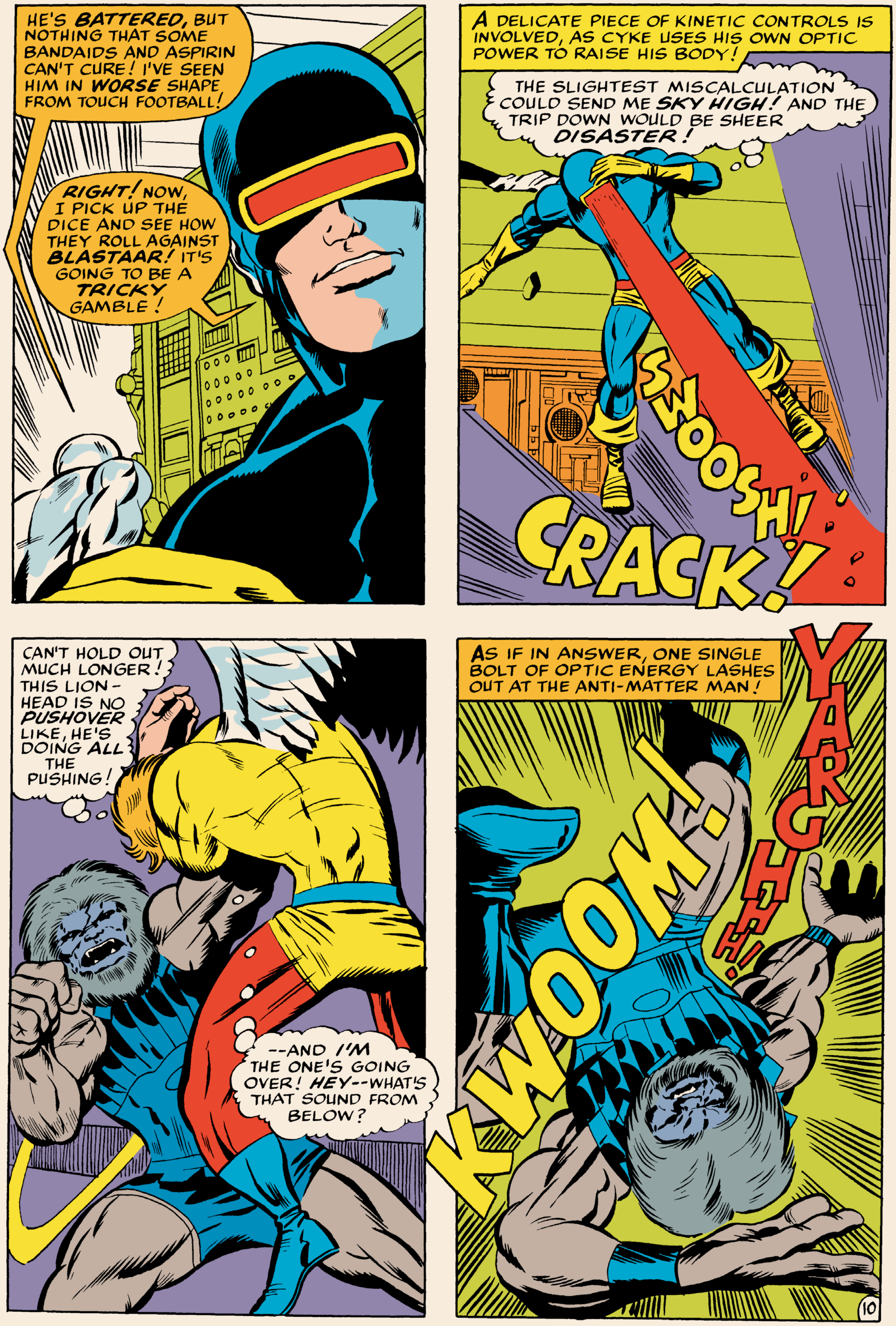

WH--WHAT HAPPENED? OHHH! SCOTT--THE MACHINE--IT'S STILL OPERATING! I DON'T KNOW WHAT EFFECT IT CAN HAVE WITHOUT A HUMAN BRAIN DIRECTING IT!
COME ON, HANK--CUT THE MAIN FUSE! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, MAN!
I AM NOT EQUIVOCATING IN THE LEAST, GOOD FRIEND! BUT RIGHT NOW THAT FUSE HOUSING IS HOTTER THAN THE SEVENTH CIRCLE OF DANTE'S INFERNO! THE MACHINE IS LIKE A SPONGE--
--SOAKING UP EVERY LAST DROP OF ENERGY FROM OUR ATOMIC GENERATOR! WHERE IS IT ALL GOING?
AND, IN THE OUTER REGIONS OF THE AWESOME NEGATIVE ZONE, A TERRIFYING COINCIDENCE IS UNDERWAY--A JUNCTURE OF TWO LINES OF EXISTENCE THAT ONLY SOME TWISTED, WRATHFUL FATE WOULD HAVE JOINED!
AAAAGHH! WHAT IS THIS BONE-DEEP PAIN THAT SEARS ME LIKE A KNIFE OF FIRE? IT IS THE FINGERS OF SOME INVISIBLE HAND--DRAWING ME AGAINST MY OWN LIMITLESS POWER PULLING ME INTO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE--WHERE I WILL BE DESTROYED!
HOW IS THIS? I AM WITHIN THE ATMOSPHERIC PERIPHERY NOW--YET MY ANTI-MATTER SUBSTANCE IS NOT EXPLODING! THERE IS BUT ONE ANSWER!
SOMETHING HAS FREED ME! I AM ABLE ONCE MORE TO STALK THAT WORLD WHICH DOOMED ME--AND TO BRING DOWN TOTAL ANNIHILATION UPON MY TORMENTORS! BLASTAAR LIVES AGAIN!
5

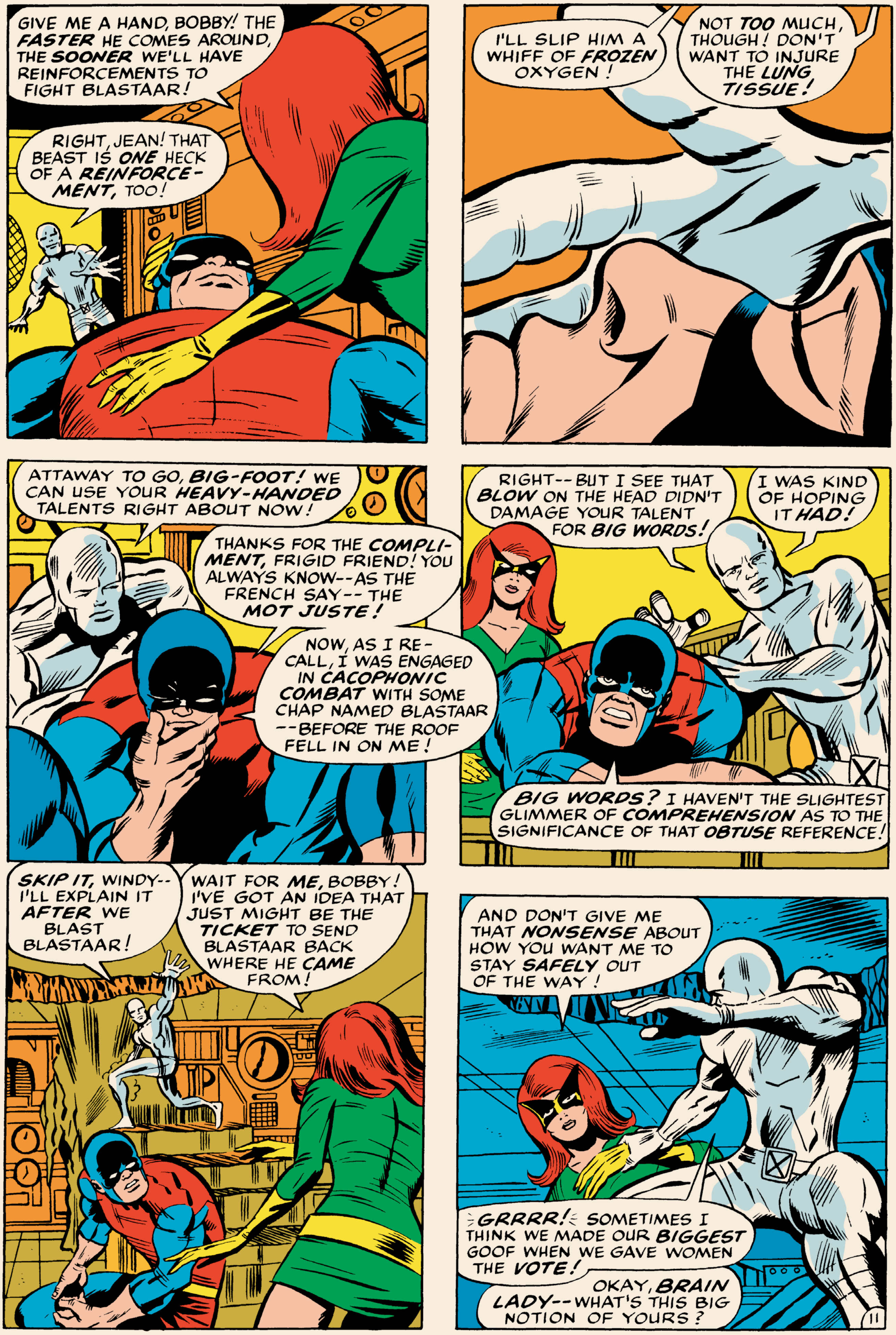

NO CHOICE NOW! HAVE TO TEAR THE MAIN POWER LINE APART WITH MY BARE HANDS AND--
WAIT! SOMETHING THERE--WRITHING IN THE CRACKLING ENERGY THAT POURS FROM THE OVERLOAD MACHINE!
AND--UNLESS I'VE FLIPPED MY CEREBRUM--IT'S TAKING ON AN ALMOST HUMAN SHAPE!
YOU ARE NOT MISTAKEN, MY FEEBLE FRIEND! WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS THE ALL-POWERFUL, UNEQUALLED PRESENCE OF THE NEW MASTER OF EARTH--BLASTAAR!
IT IS OBVIOUS--SICKENINGLY SO--THAT YOU HAVE AN ALL-POWERFUL MOUTH, SIR! BUT THE REST OF YOUR BOASTFUL INTRODUCTION REMAINS TO BE TESTED! SHALL WE COMMENCE THE EXAMINATION?
YOU ARE ONE WHO MUST LEARN THRU SORROWFUL EXPERIENCE, I SEE! THEN LET IT BE SO! BLASTAAR SHALL BE YOUR TEACHER!
AND LET THE LESSON THAT YOU ABSORB HERE SERVE AS A WARNING TO ALL EARTHLINGS! I WILL NOT BE DEFIED! AND I WILL NOT BE DENIED!
LEARN WELL THIS TEACHING--IN THE BRIEF AND PAINFUL MOMENT OF EXISTENCE THAT REMAINS TO YOU! FOR IT IS A LESSON THAT CAN BE TAUGHT BUT ONCE!
KZAM!
6

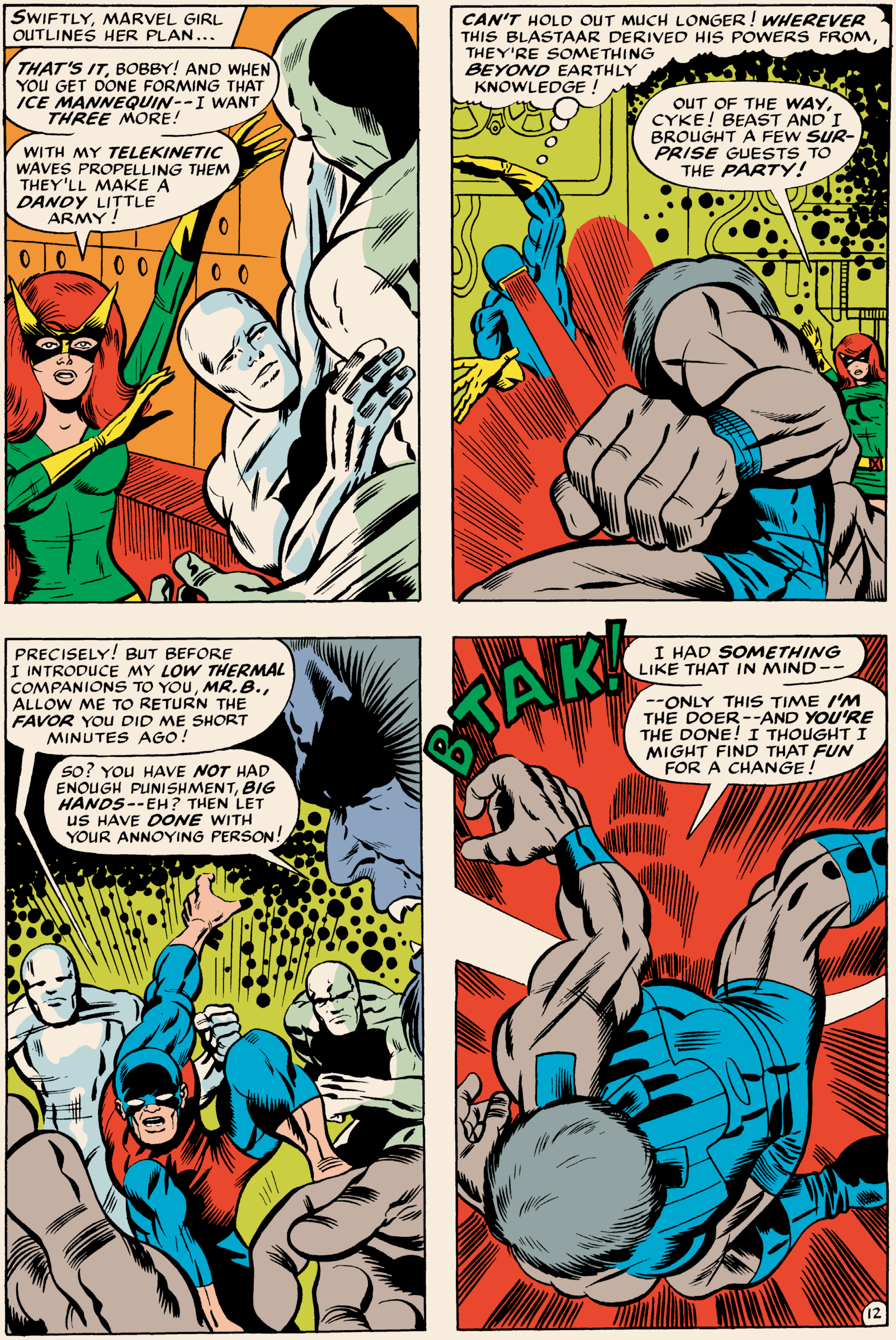

AT THAT MOMENT, AS A TELEPATHIC MESSAGE FLASHES TO ANOTHER PART OF THE BUILDING...
BOBBY! WARREN! DANGER HELP US--QUICKLY!
IT'S JEAN! SHE'S IN TROUBLE!
BEING THAT SHE'S THE ONLY ONE OF US WITH TELEPATHIC POWERS--I'D SAY YOU FIGURED THAT ONE OUT PRETTY GOOD! I THINK YOU'RE ALMOST READY TO HANDLE LONG DIVISION, ICE MAN!
I THINK YOU'RE ALMOST READY FOR A NOSE FULL OF ICE CUBES, BIRD BRAIN!
WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT I'M GONNA DELIVER FOLLOWING THIS LITTLE EMERGENCY RUN! MEET ME AFTER THE MAYHEM, SLUGGER!
NOW LET'S GO SEE WHAT'S BOTHERING JEAN! SHE DOESN'T SCREAM OVER ANYTHING SHORT OF WORLD DISASTER!
HOLD ON, GAL! HELP IS ON THE WAY!
I DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT FORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCE FREED ME FROM THE COSMIC DESOLATION TO WHICH I HAD BEEN DOOMED! SOME FANTASTIC CONCENTRATION OF ENERGY, OF COURSE!
CYKE--IT WAS ME! I DID IT--MEDDLING WITH THAT MACHINE OF THE PROFESSOR'S!
SKIP IT FOR NOW, MARVEL GIRL!
PLENTY OF TIME TO FIGURE THIS WHOLE THING OUT--ONCE WE GET YOU TO SAFETY! HANG ON--BECAUSE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO--
--BATTER MY WAY PAST THIS BLASTAAR CHARACTER! AND THE WAY HE HANDLED HANK, HE'S NO CREAMPUFF!
7

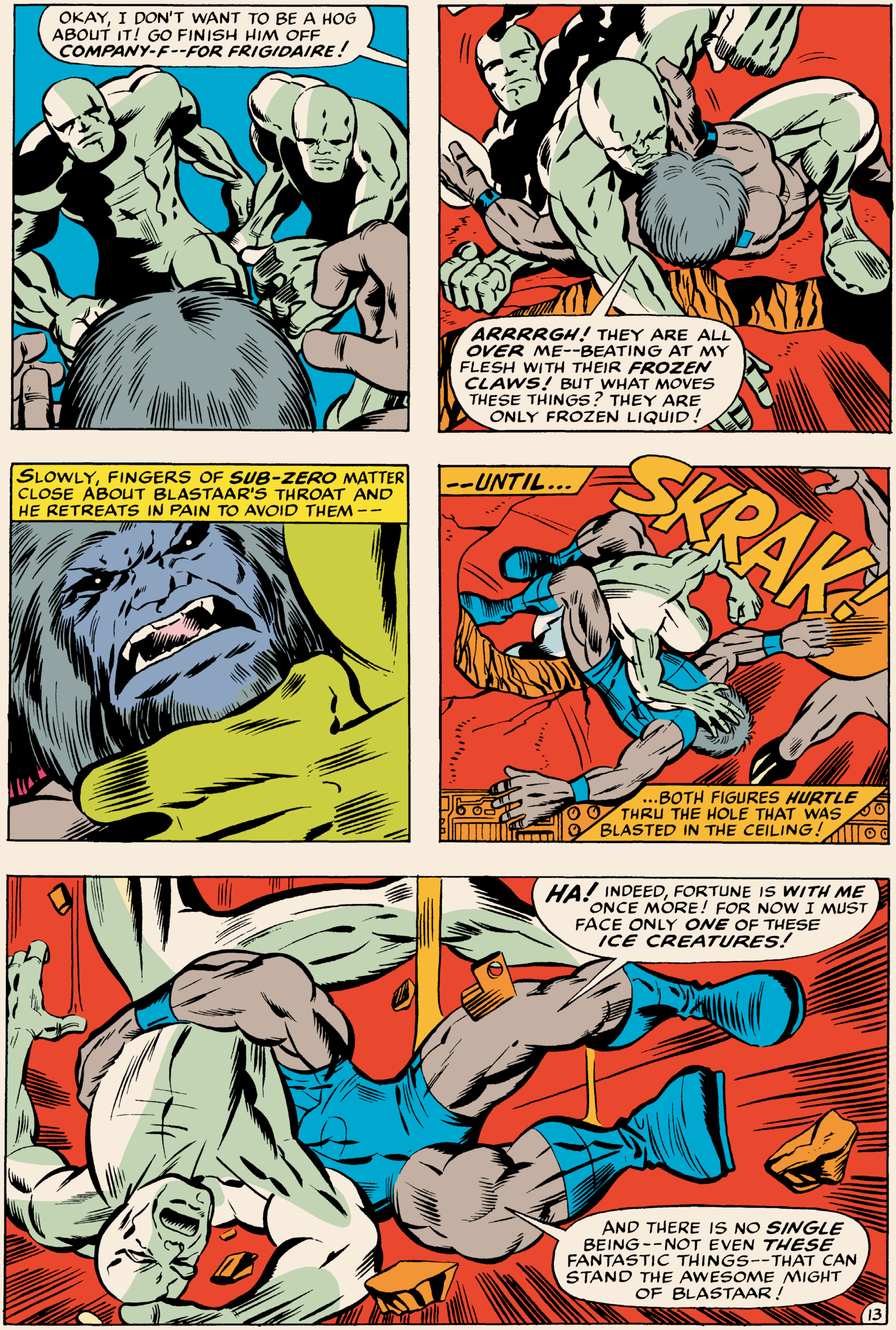

YOU MAKE THE GAME MUCH TOO **SIMPLE**, MY FRIEND! BY ATTEMPTING A DIRECT ATTACK ON ME, YOU REDUCE THE WHOLE THING TO A **MERE** MATTER OF BRUTE FORCE! AND THAT CONTEST YOU CAN **NEVER** SURVIVE!
WELL, DON'T LOOK **NOW**, BLASTAAR-- BUT IT'S ABOUT TO GET MIGHTY **COMPLICATED!** LIKE, FOR EXAMPLE--
--WE JUST OPENED A **SECOND FRONT!** NOW YOU'RE UNDER ATTACK FROM **LAND** AND **AIR!**
ANGEL! YOU DO HAVE A **KNACK** FOR **NICK**-OF-TIME RESCUES!
A **FLYING** HUMAN! INDEED I HAVE STUMBLED UPON A **RARE** COLLECTION OF MEN HERE! BUT THIS IS OF LITTLE CONCERN TO ME **ONE** BLAST OF ENERGY WILL BRING DOWN THAT--**BIRD!**
MISSED ME, LION-HEAD! HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR **OPTOMETRIST** LATELY?
THERE IS A **MUCH** SIMPLER MEANS OF HANDLING YOU! FOR, THOUGH YOU ARE NOT YET **AWARE** OF IT, BLASTAAR **TOO** CAN FLY!
NOT WITH THE **ARCHAIC** MUTATION WHICH GIVES YOU YOUR BIRD POWERS, BUT--
--WITH MY **OWN** NATURAL ABILITY TO PROPEL MYSELF THRU SPACE BY EMITTING **ENERGY** DIRECTLY FROM MY BODY! A **LIVING** ROCKET-- AIMED AT YOUR **VITALS!**
SHOOM!
8

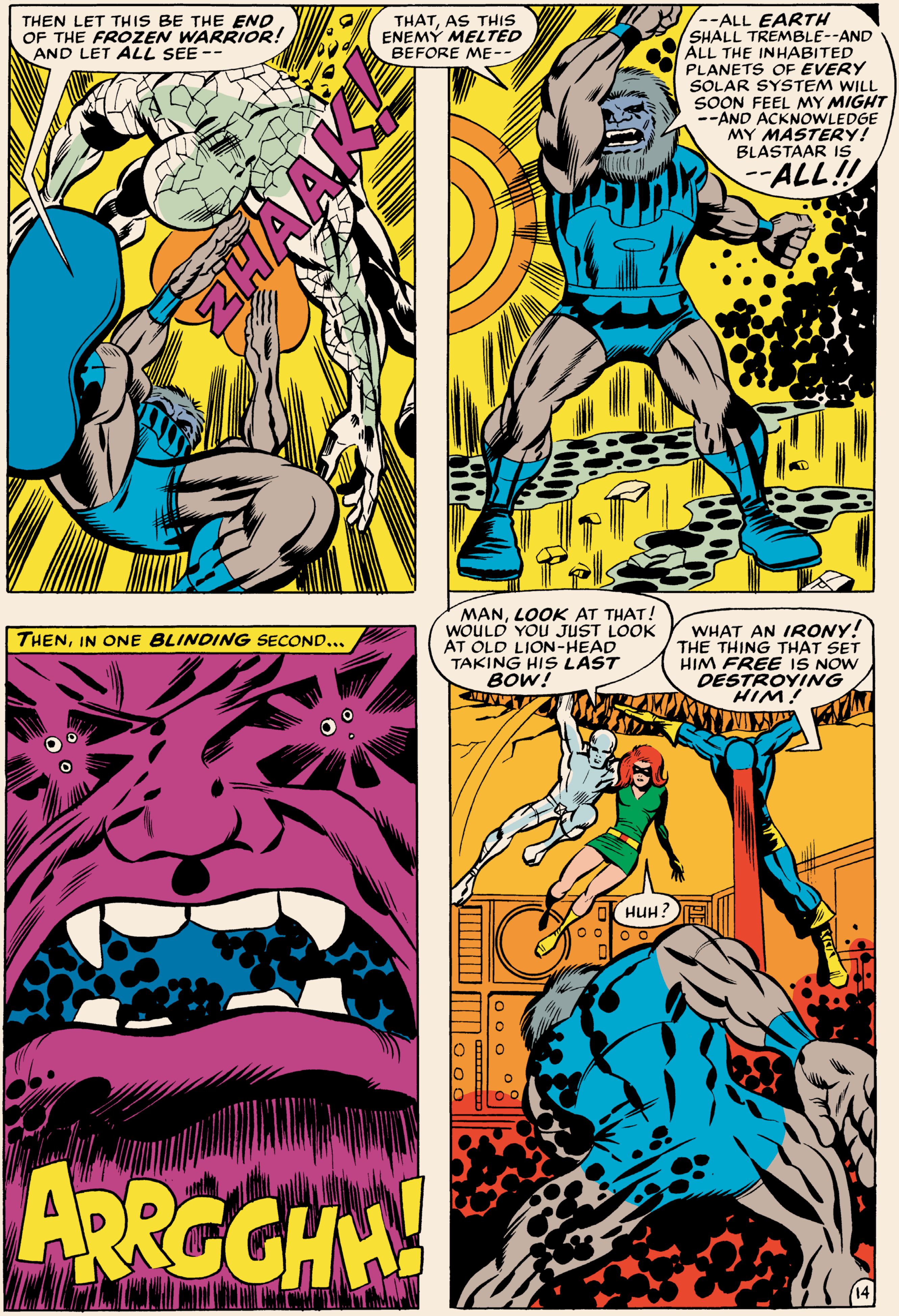

WHERE YOU FLY LIKE A BIRD--I THUNDER THROUGH SPACE LIKE A *GUIDED MISSILE!* AND ALL THE POWER OF--
--MY ROCKET ENERGY SHALL CONVERGE IN A SINGLE SHATTER-IN *BLOW!* AND THE FEEBLE TARGET--
--SHALL BE *YOU!*
BAWACK!
FOR THERE IS NO *ESCAPE* FROM MY RAGE--AND NO RECOVERY FROM MY ULTIMATE MIGHT!
FWOOM!
HERE, ABOVE THE SLEEPING CITY, YOU WILL FIND YOUR FINAL *RESTING PLACE!* AND LET THIS SERVE AS NOTICE TO ALL WHO WOULD RESIST *BLASTAAR!*
ANOTHER SECOND OR TWO AND WARREN HAS *HAD IT!* BUT *HOW* DO WE GET UP THERE IN TIME?
LET ME WORRY ABOUT THAT! YOU CHECK OUT HANK! HE TOOK A *HEAP* OF PUNISHMENT!
9

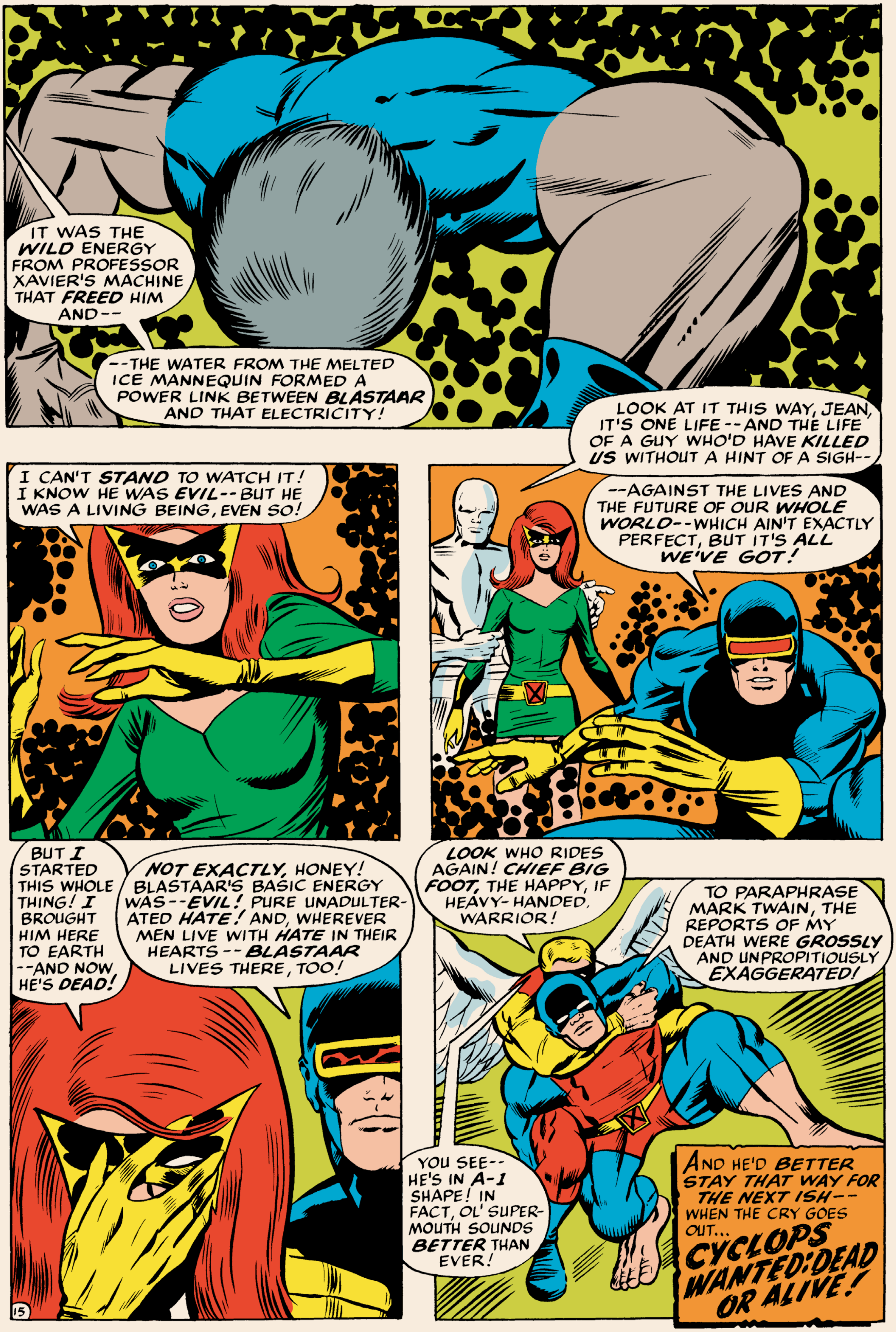

HE'S BATTERED, BUT NOTHING THAT SOME BANDAIDS AND ASPIRIN CAN'T CURE! I'VE SEEN HIM IN WORSE SHAPE FROM TOUCH FOOTBALL!
RIGHT! NOW, I PICK UP THE DICE AND SEE HOW THEY ROLL AGAINST BLASTAAR! IT'S GOING TO BE A TRICKY GAMBLE!
A DELICATE PIECE OF KINETIC CONTROLS IS INVOLVED, AS CYKE USES HIS OWN OPTIC POWER TO RAISE HIS BODY!
THE SLIGHTEST MISCALCULATION COULD SEND ME SKY HIGH! AND THE TRIP DOWN WOULD BE SHEER DISASTER!
SWOOSH!
CRACK!
CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER! THIS LION-HEAD IS NO PUSHOVER LIKE, HE'S DOING ALL THE PUSHING!
--AND I'M THE ONE'S GOING OVER! HEY--WHAT'S THAT SOUND FROM BELOW?
AS IF IN ANSWER, ONE SINGLE BOLT OF OPTIC ENERGY LASHES OUT AT THE ANTI-MATTER MAN!
YARGHHHH!
KWOOM!
10

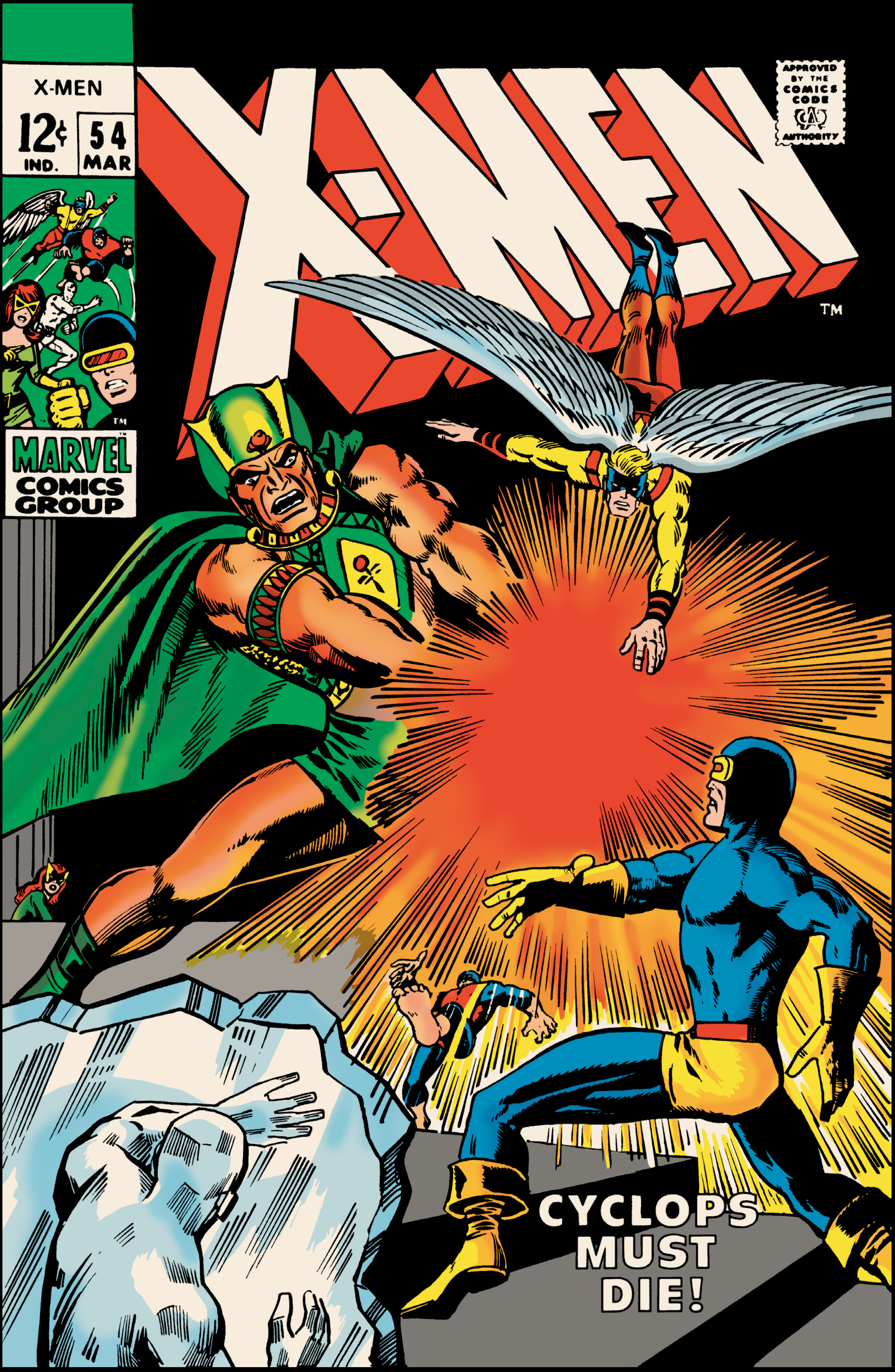

GIVE ME A HAND, BOBBY! THE FASTER HE COMES AROUND, THE SOONER WE'LL HAVE REINFORCEMENTS TO FIGHT BLASTAAR!
RIGHT, JEAN! THAT BEAST IS ONE HECK OF A REINFORCEMENT, TOO!
I'LL SLIP HIM A WHIFF OF FROZEN OXYGEN!
NOT TOO MUCH, THOUGH! DON'T WANT TO INJURE THE LUNG TISSUE!
ATTAWAY TO GO, BIG-FOOT! WE CAN USE YOUR HEAVY-HANDED TALENTS RIGHT ABOUT NOW!
THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT, FRIGID FRIEND! YOU ALWAYS KNOW--AS THE FRENCH SAY--THE MOT JUSTE!
NOW, AS I RECALL, I WAS ENGAGED IN CACOPHONIC COMBAT WITH SOME CHAP NAMED BLASTAAR --BEFORE THE ROOF FELL IN ON ME!
RIGHT--BUT I SEE THAT BLOW ON THE HEAD DIDN'T DAMAGE YOUR TALENT FOR BIG WORDS!
I WAS KIND OF HOPING IT HAD!
BIG WORDS? I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST GLIMMER OF COMPREHENSION AS TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT OBTUSE REFERENCE!
SKIP IT, WINDY-- I'LL EXPLAIN IT AFTER WE BLAST BLASTAAR!
WAIT FOR ME, BOBBY! I'VE GOT AN IDEA THAT JUST MIGHT BE THE TICKET TO SEND BLASTAAR BACK WHERE HE CAME FROM!
AND DON'T GIVE ME THAT NONSENSE ABOUT HOW YOU WANT ME TO STAY SAFELY OUT OF THE WAY!
GRRRR! SOMETIMES I THINK WE MADE OUR BIGGEST GOOF WHEN WE GAVE WOMEN THE VOTE!
OKAY, BRAIN LADY--WHAT'S THIS BIG NOTION OF YOURS?
11

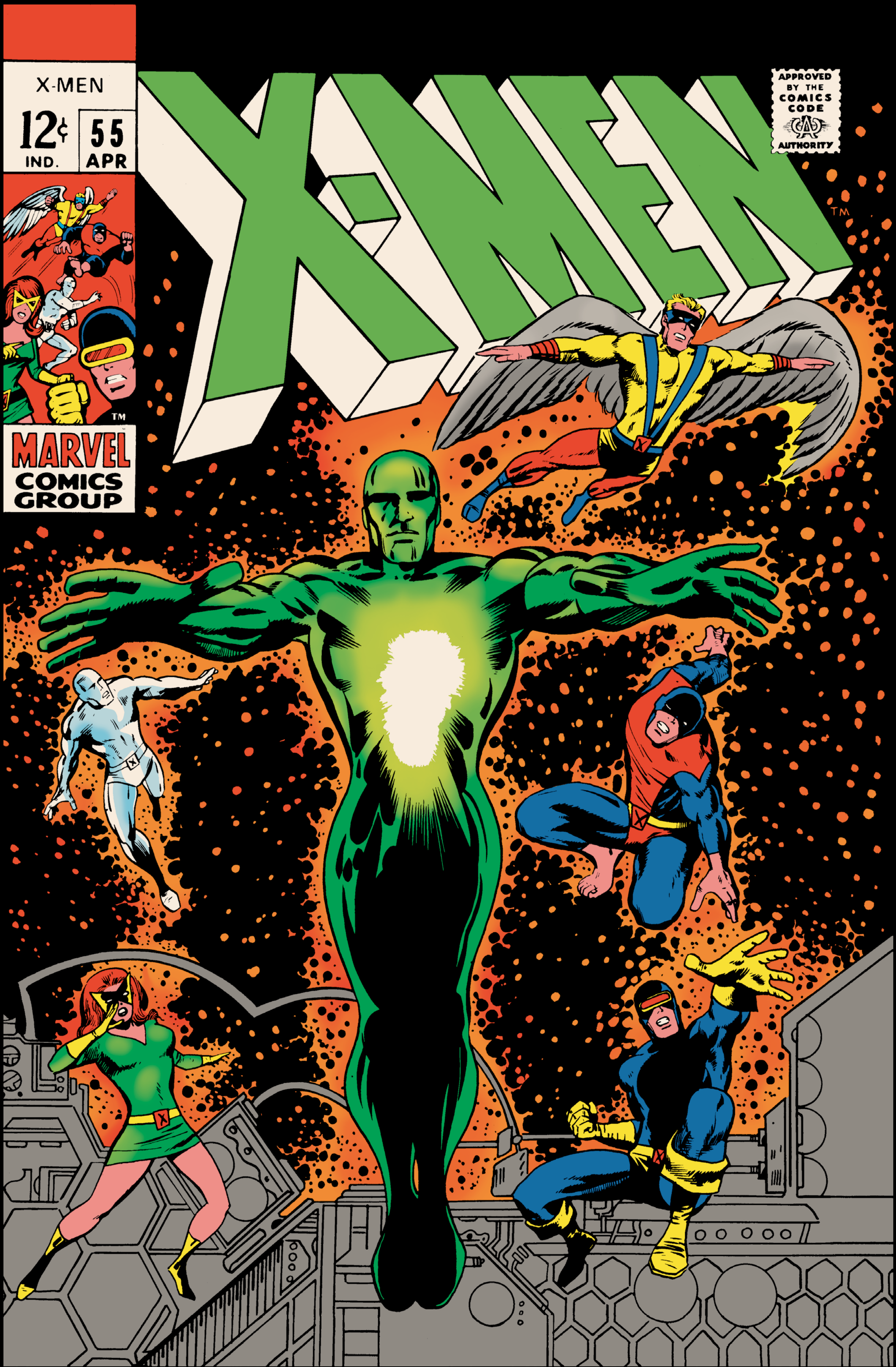

SWIFTLY, MARVEL GIRL OUTLINES HER PLAN...
THAT'S IT, BOBBY! AND WHEN YOU GET DONE FORMING THAT *ICE MANNEQUIN*--I WANT *THREE* MORE!
WITH MY *TELEKINETIC* WAVES PROPELLING THEM THEY'LL MAKE A *DANDY* LITTLE ARMY!
CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER! *WHEREVER* THIS BLASTAAR DERIVED HIS POWERS FROM, THEY'RE SOMETHING *BEYOND* EARTHLY KNOWLEDGE!
OUT OF THE *WAY,* CYKE! BEAST AND I BROUGHT A FEW *SURPRISE* GUESTS TO THE *PARTY!*
PRECISELY! BUT BEFORE I INTRODUCE MY *LOW THERMAL* COMPANIONS TO YOU, *MR. B.,* ALLOW ME TO RETURN THE *FAVOR* YOU DID ME SHORT MINUTES AGO!
SO? YOU HAVE *NOT* HAD ENOUGH PUNISHMENT, *BIG HANDS*--EH? THEN LET US HAVE *DONE* WITH YOUR ANNOYING PERSON!
BTAK!
I HAD *SOMETHING* LIKE THAT IN MIND--
--ONLY THIS TIME *I'M* THE DOER--AND *YOU'RE* THE DONE! I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND THAT *FUN* FOR A CHANGE!
12


OKAY, I DON'T WANT TO BE A HOG ABOUT IT! GO FINISH HIM OFF **COMPANY-F--FOR FRIGIDAIRE!**
ARRRRGH! THEY ARE ALL **OVER** ME--BEATING AT MY FLESH WITH THEIR **FROZEN CLAWS!** BUT WHAT MOVES THESE THINGS? THEY ARE ONLY FROZEN LIQUID!
SLOWLY, FINGERS OF **SUB-ZERO** MATTER CLOSE ABOUT BLASTAAR'S THROAT AND HE RETREATS IN PAIN TO AVOID THEM--
--UNTIL...
SKRAK!
...BOTH FIGURES **HURTLE** THRU THE HOLE THAT WAS BLASTED IN THE CEILING!
HA! INDEED, FORTUNE IS **WITH ME** ONCE MORE! FOR NOW I MUST FACE ONLY **ONE** OF THESE **ICE CREATURES!**
AND THERE IS NO **SINGLE** BEING--NOT EVEN **THESE** FANTASTIC THINGS--THAT CAN STAND THE AWESOME MIGHT OF BLASTAAR!
13

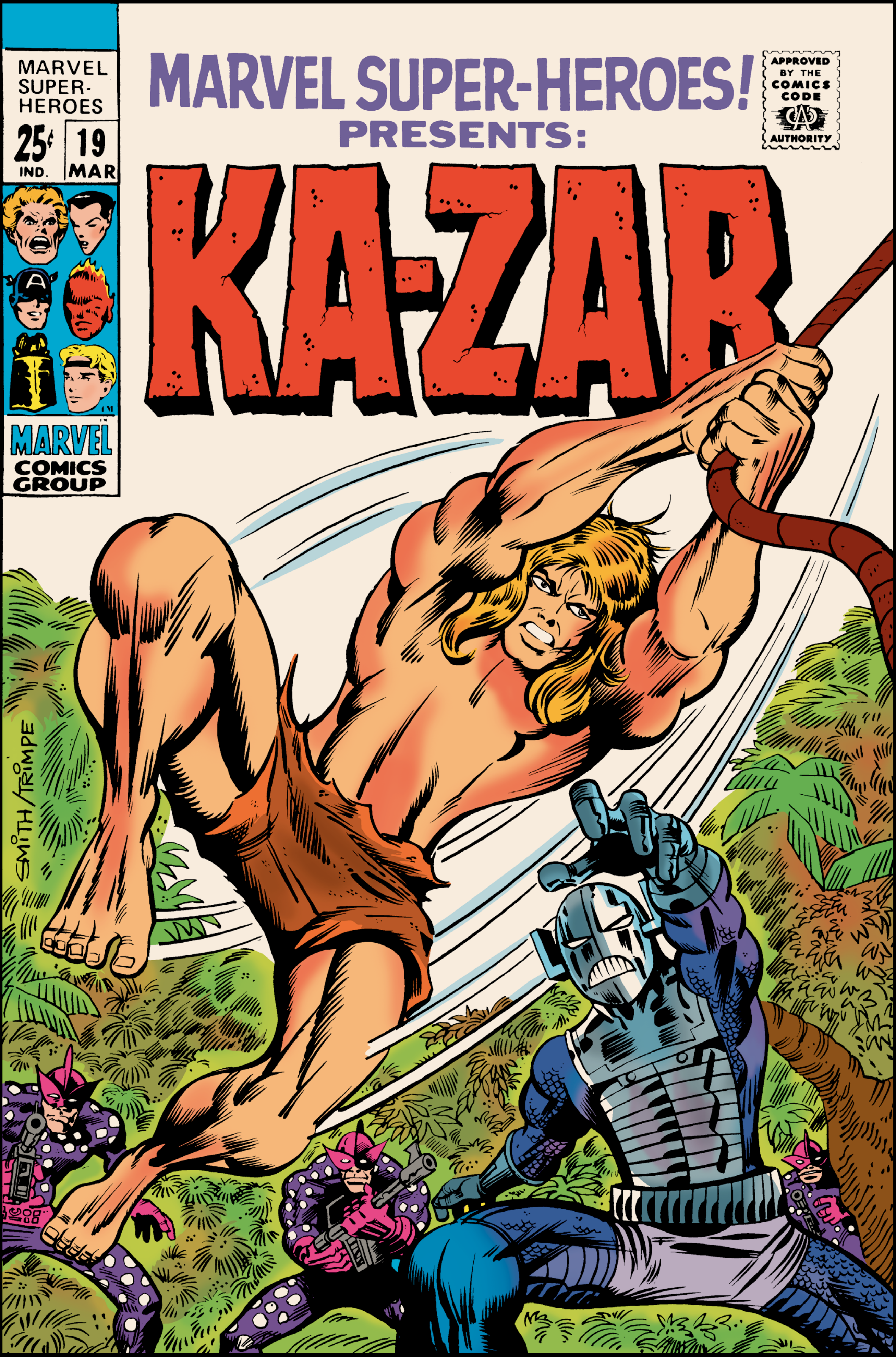

THEN LET THIS BE THE *END* OF THE *FROZEN WARRIOR!* AND LET *ALL* SEE --
ZHAAK!
THAT, AS THIS ENEMY *MELTED* BEFORE ME --
-- ALL *EARTH* SHALL TREMBLE -- AND ALL THE INHABITED PLANETS OF *EVERY* SOLAR SYSTEM WILL SOON FEEL MY *MIGHT* -- AND ACKNOWLEDGE MY *MASTERY!* BLASTAAR IS -- *ALL!!*
THEN, IN ONE *BLINDING* SECOND...
ARRGGHH!
MAN, *LOOK* AT THAT! WOULD YOU JUST LOOK AT OLD LION-HEAD TAKING HIS *LAST BOW!*
WHAT AN *IRONY!* THE THING THAT SET HIM *FREE* IS NOW *DESTROYING HIM!*
HUH?
14


IT WAS THE *WILD* ENERGY FROM PROFESSOR XAVIER'S MACHINE THAT *FREED* HIM AND--
--THE WATER FROM THE MELTED ICE MANNEQUIN FORMED A POWER LINK BETWEEN *BLASTAAR* AND THAT ELECTRICITY!
I CAN'T *STAND* TO WATCH IT! I KNOW HE WAS *EVIL*--BUT HE WAS A LIVING BEING, EVEN SO!
LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, JEAN, IT'S ONE LIFE--AND THE LIFE OF A GUY WHO'D HAVE *KILLED US* WITHOUT A HINT OF A SIGH--
--AGAINST THE LIVES AND THE FUTURE OF OUR *WHOLE WORLD*--WHICH AIN'T EXACTLY PERFECT, BUT IT'S *ALL WE'VE GOT!*
BUT *I* STARTED THIS WHOLE THING! *I* BROUGHT HIM HERE TO EARTH --AND NOW HE'S *DEAD!*
NOT EXACTLY, HONEY! BLASTAAR'S BASIC ENERGY WAS--*EVIL!* PURE UNADULTERATED *HATE!* AND, WHEREVER MEN LIVE WITH *HATE* IN THEIR HEARTS--*BLASTAAR* LIVES THERE, TOO!
15
LOOK WHO RIDES AGAIN! *CHIEF BIG FOOT,* THE HAPPY, IF HEAVY-HANDED, WARRIOR!
TO PARAPHRASE MARK TWAIN, THE REPORTS OF MY DEATH WERE *GROSSLY* AND UNPROPITIOUSLY *EXAGGERATED!*
YOU SEE--HE'S IN *A-1* SHAPE! IN FACT, OL' SUPER-MOUTH SOUNDS *BETTER* THAN EVER!
AND HE'D *BETTER STAY THAT WAY FOR THE NEXT ISH*--WHEN THE CRY GOES OUT... *CYCLOPS WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE!*

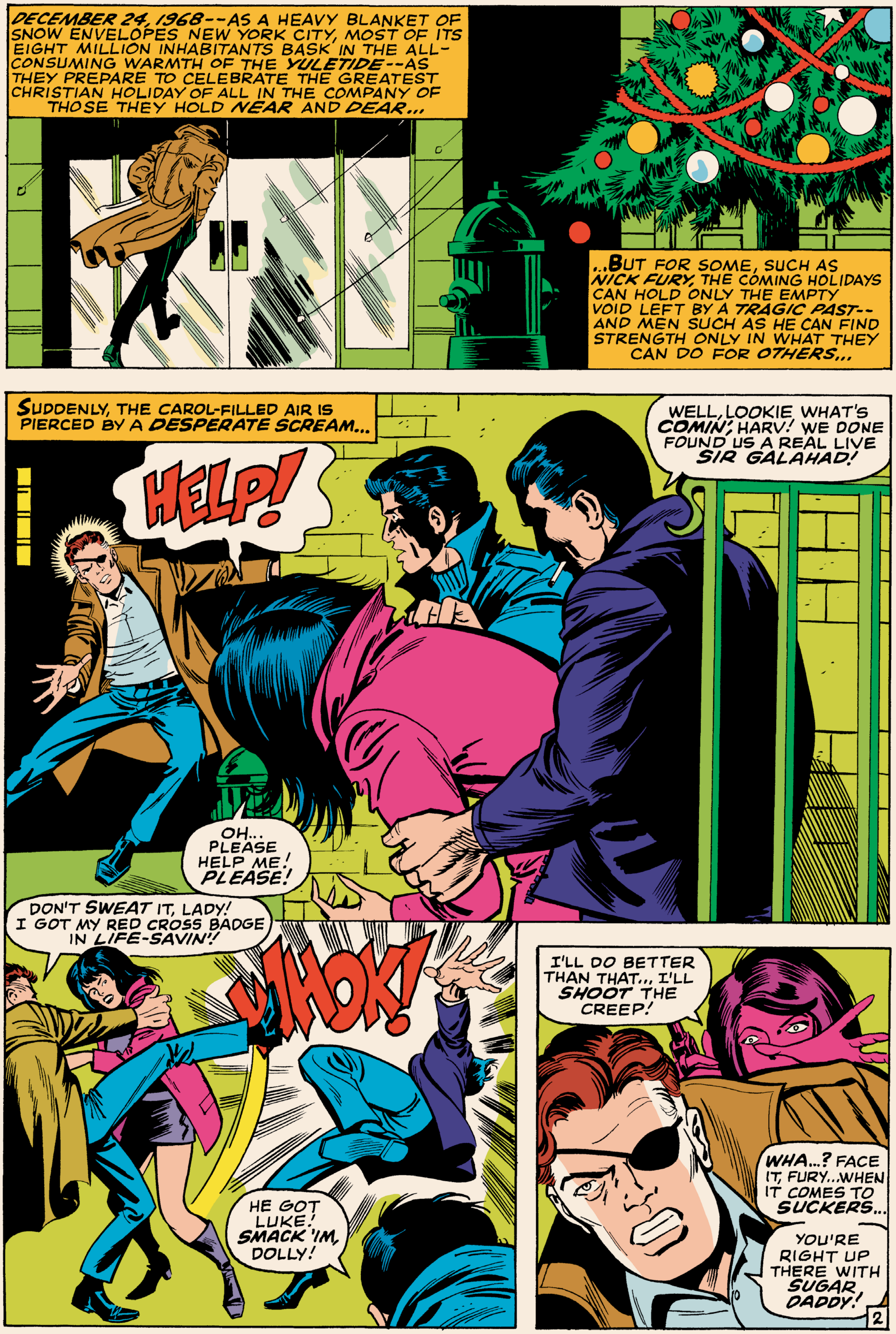

X-MEN
12¢
IND.
54
MAR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
X-MEN™
CYCLOPS MUST DIE!

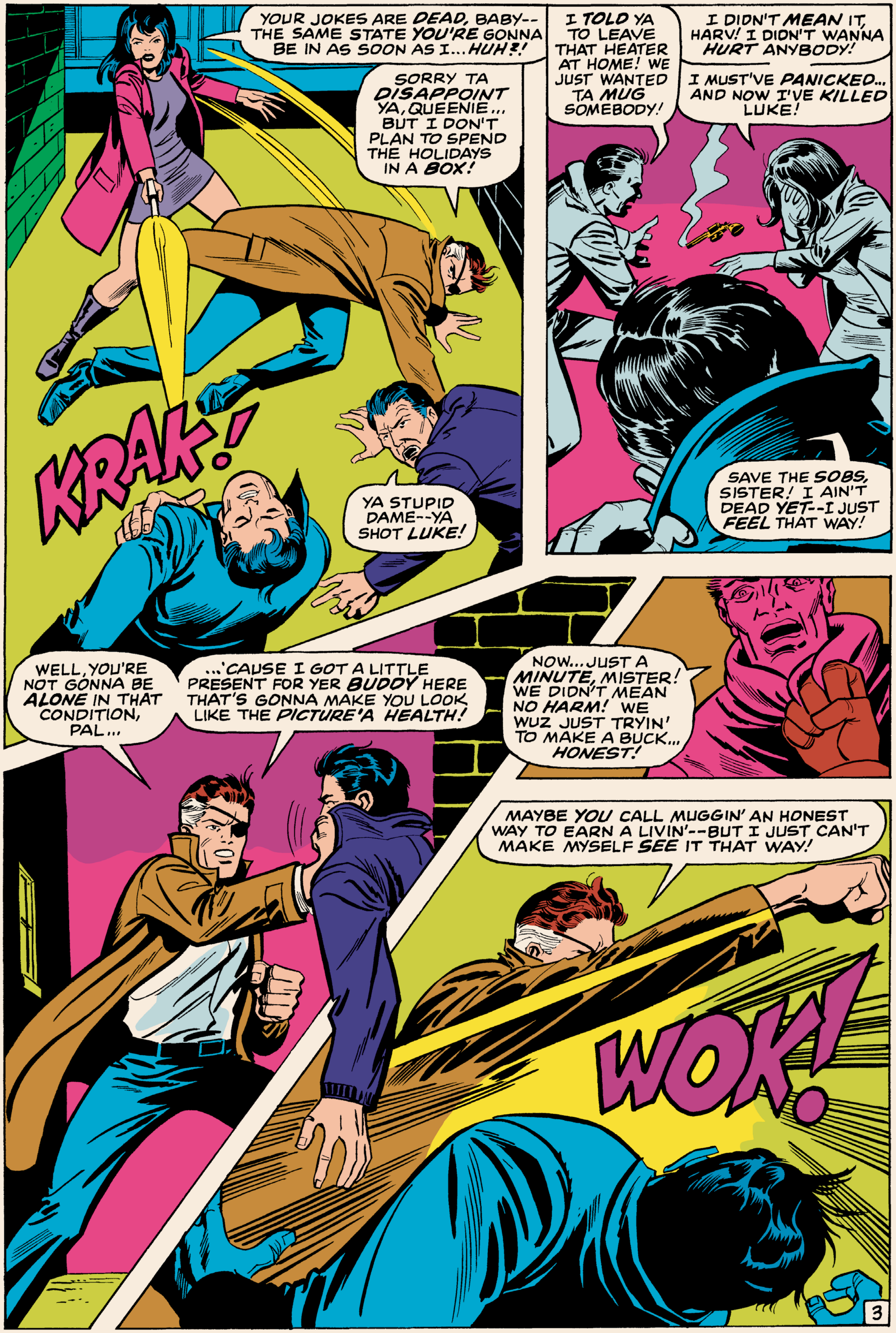

X-MEN
12¢
55
IND.
APR
X-MEN
TM
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
TM
MARVEL COMICS GROUP

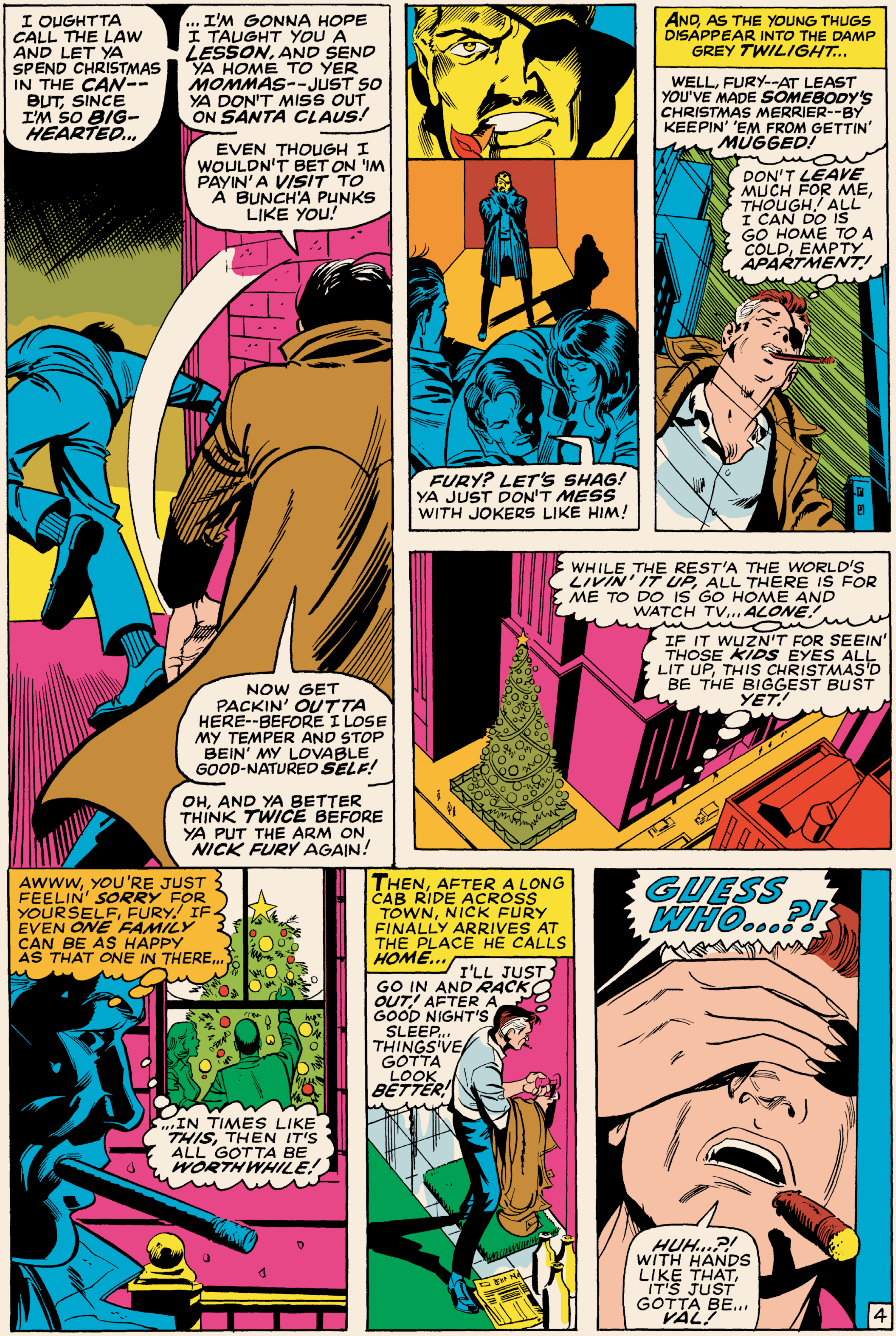
CAPT. MARVEL
12¢ IND.
11 MAR
CAPTAIN MARVEL
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
SMITH/TRIMPE
REBIRTH!

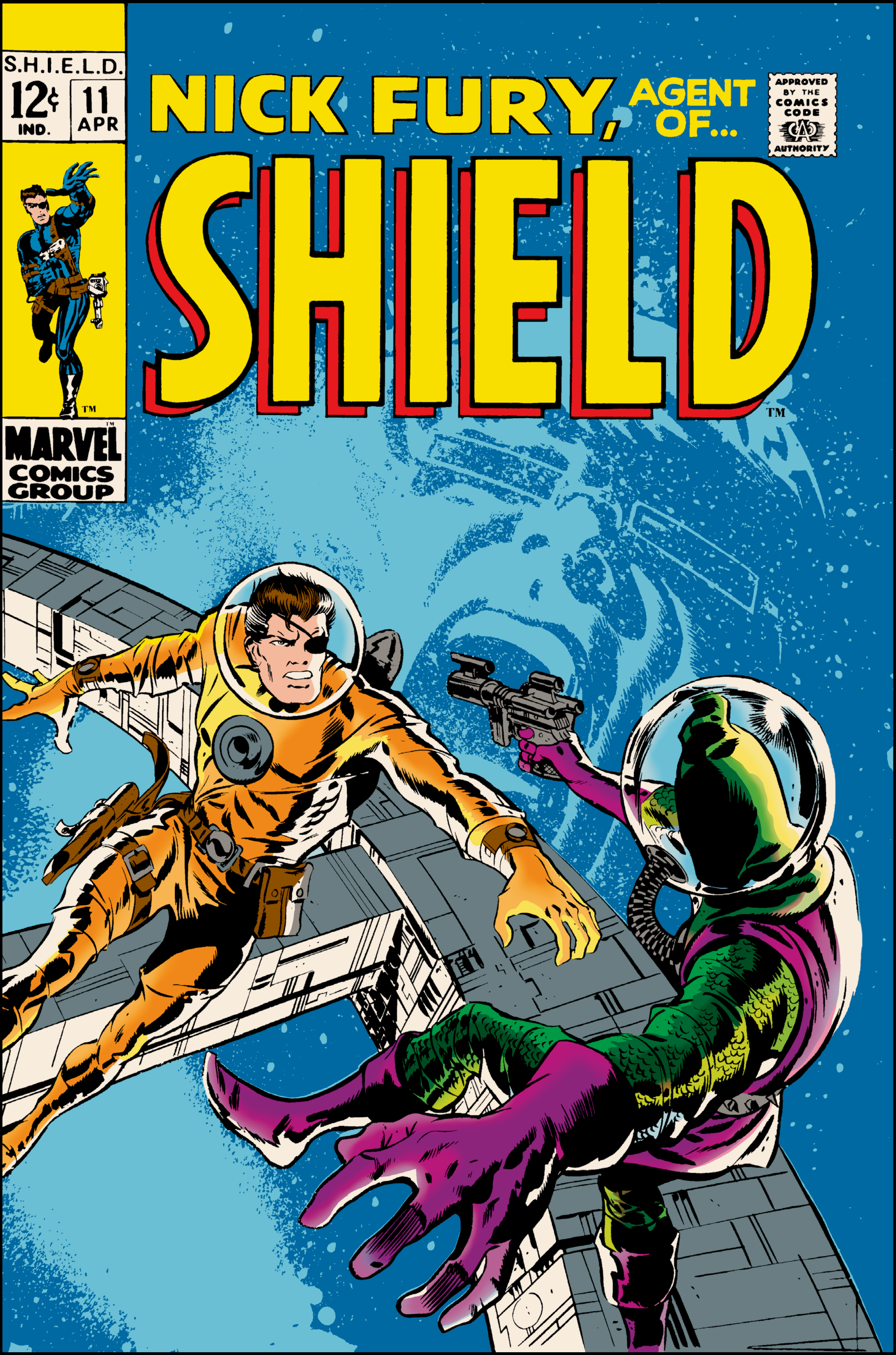

MARVEL SUPER-HEROES
25¢ IND.
19 MAR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
MARVEL SUPER-HEROES! PRESENTS:
KA-ZAR
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SMITH/TRIMPE

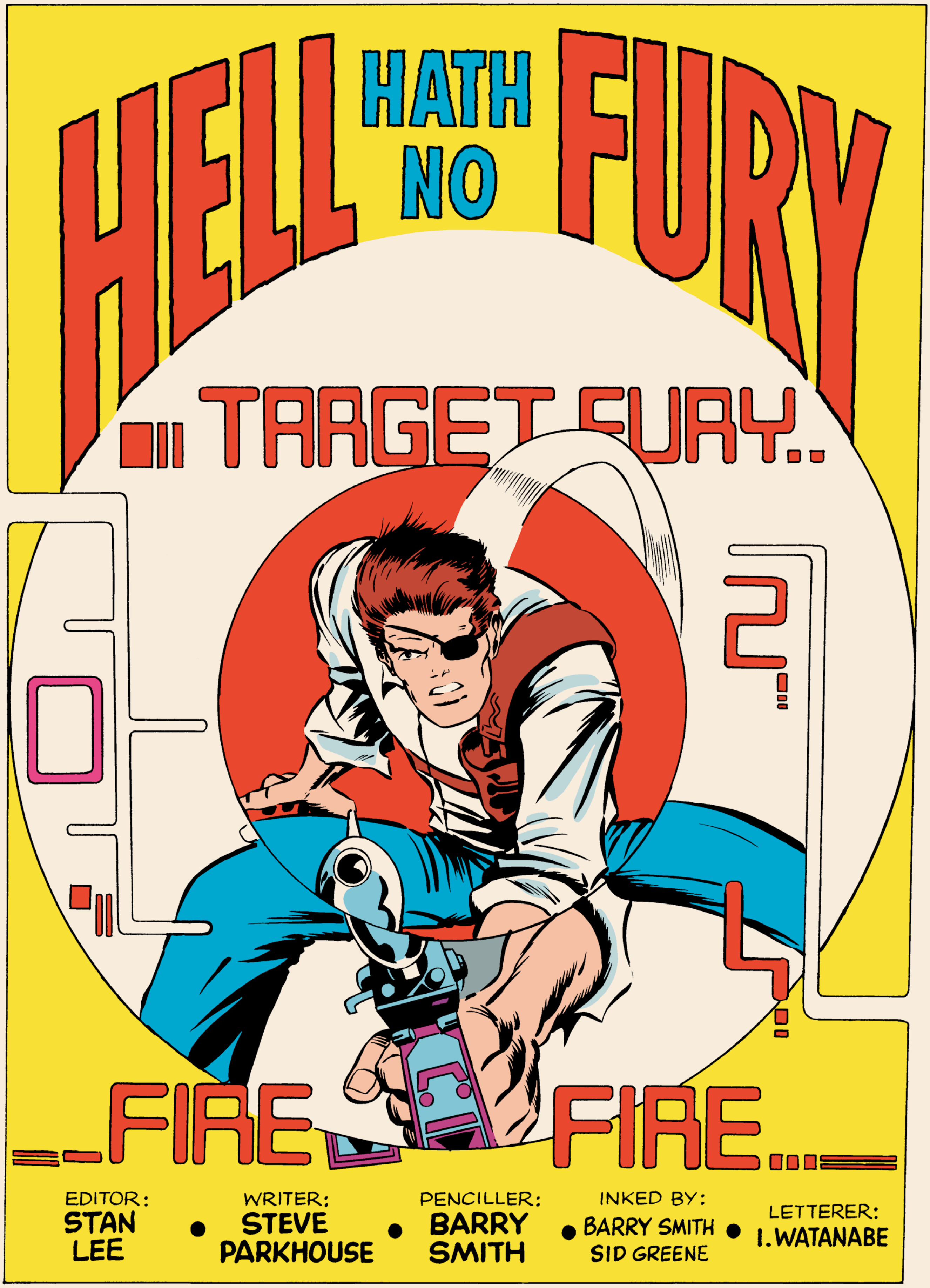
The sequence on the three pages beginning overleaf. (2-4 of Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. *#10) beginning with panel 2 of the first page and ending with panel 3 of the last page are drawn by Windsor-Smith in the middle of an issue penciled by Frank Springer. There is no evident narrative connection to the larger storyline, and they are believed to have been done for another, unused story.*

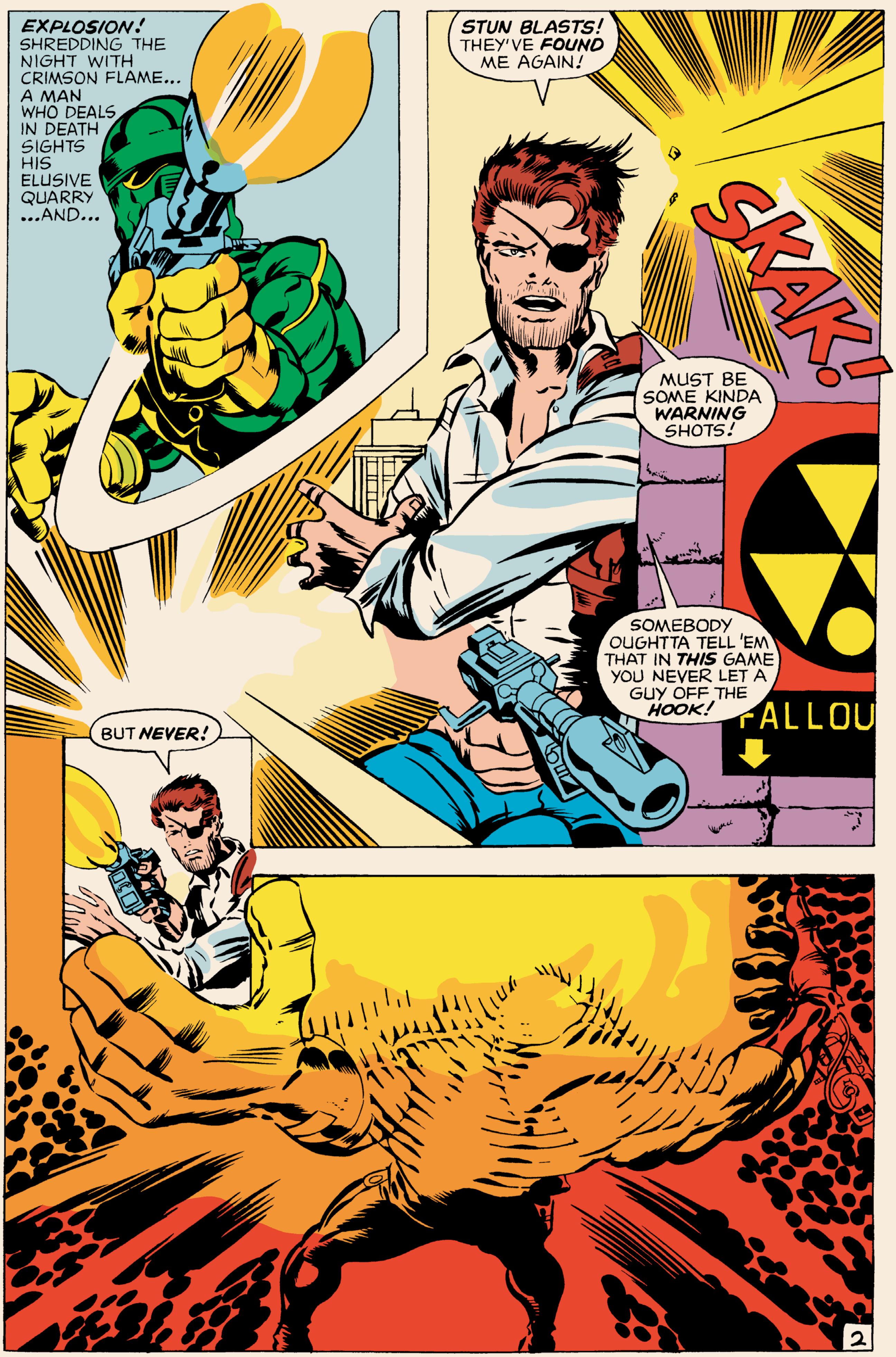

DECEMBER 24, 1968--AS A HEAVY BLANKET OF SNOW ENVELOPES NEW YORK CITY, MOST OF ITS EIGHT MILLION INHABITANTS BASK IN THE ALL-CONSUMING WARMTH OF THE YULETIDE--AS THEY PREPARE TO CELEBRATE THE GREATEST CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY OF ALL IN THE COMPANY OF THOSE THEY HOLD NEAR AND DEAR...
..BUT FOR SOME, SUCH AS NICK FURY, THE COMING HOLIDAYS CAN HOLD ONLY THE EMPTY VOID LEFT BY A TRAGIC PAST--AND MEN SUCH AS HE CAN FIND STRENGTH ONLY IN WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR OTHERS...
SUDDENLY, THE CAROL-FILLED AIR IS PIERCED BY A DESPERATE SCREAM...
HELP!
WELL, LOOKIE WHAT'S COMIN', HARV! WE DONE FOUND US A REAL LIVE SIR GALAHAD!
OH... PLEASE HELP ME! PLEASE!
DON'T SWEAT IT, LADY! I GOT MY RED CROSS BADGE IN LIFE-SAVIN'!
WHOK!
HE GOT LUKE! SMACK 'IM, DOLLY!
I'LL DO BETTER THAN THAT... I'LL SHOOT THE CREEP!
WHA...? FACE IT, FURY...WHEN IT COMES TO SUCKERS...
YOU'RE RIGHT UP THERE WITH SUGAR DADDY!
2

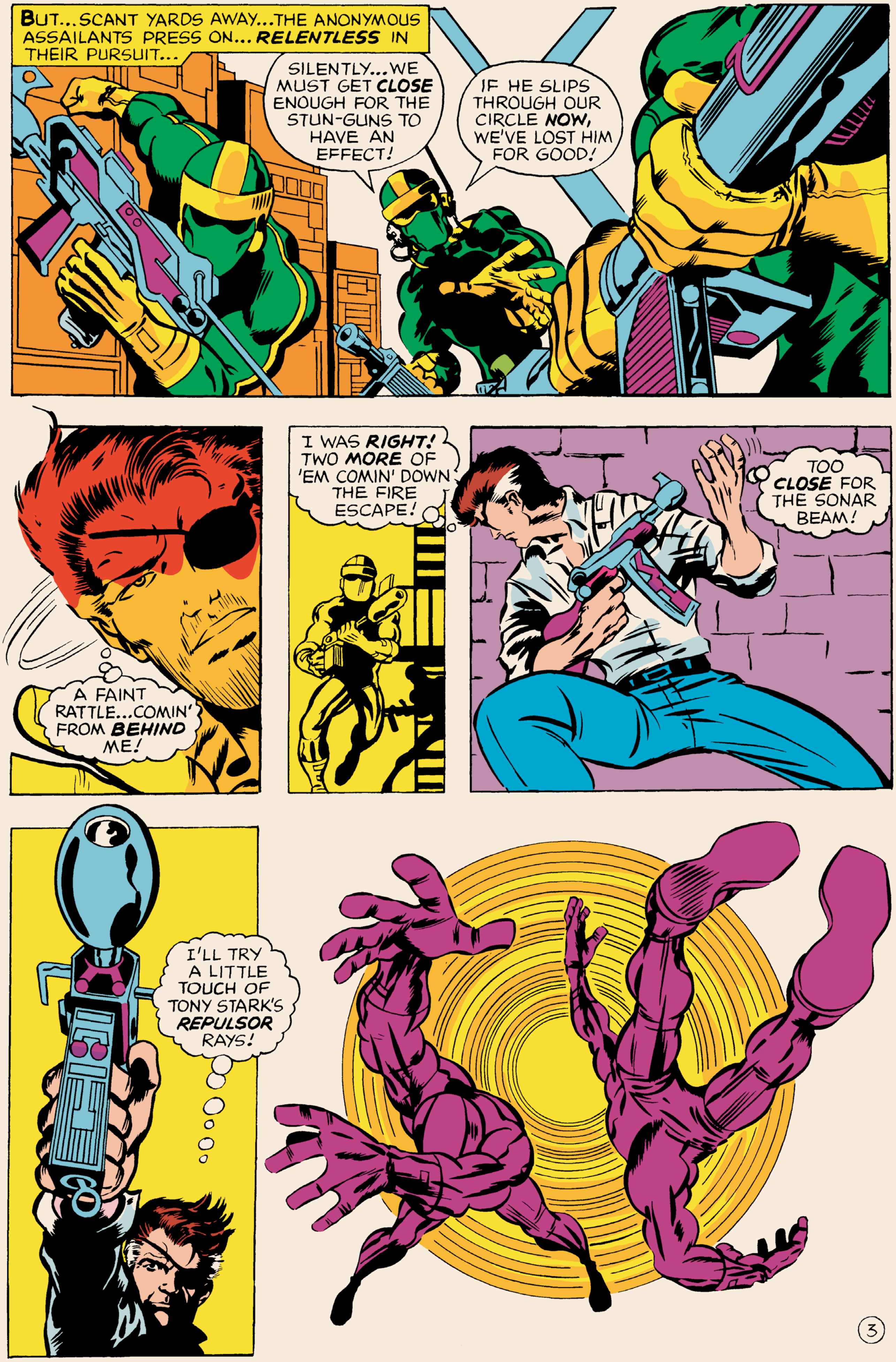

YOUR JOKES ARE DEAD, BABY-- THE SAME STATE YOU'RE GONNA BE IN AS SOON AS I... HUH?!
SORRY TA DISAPPOINT YA, QUEENIE... BUT I DON'T PLAN TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS IN A BOX!
KRAK!
YA STUPID DAME--YA SHOT LUKE!
I TOLD YA TO LEAVE THAT HEATER AT HOME! WE JUST WANTED TA MUG SOMEBODY!
I DIDN'T MEAN IT, HARV! I DIDN'T WANNA HURT ANYBODY!
I MUST'VE PANICKED... AND NOW I'VE KILLED LUKE!
SAVE THE SOBS, SISTER! I AIN'T DEAD YET--I JUST FEEL THAT WAY!
WELL, YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE ALONE IN THAT CONDITION, PAL...
...'CAUSE I GOT A LITTLE PRESENT FOR YER BUDDY HERE THAT'S GONNA MAKE YOU LOOK LIKE THE PICTURE'A HEALTH!
NOW... JUST A MINUTE, MISTER! WE DIDN'T MEAN NO HARM! WE WUZ JUST TRYIN' TO MAKE A BUCK... HONEST!
MAYBE YOU CALL MUGGIN' AN HONEST WAY TO EARN A LIVIN'--BUT I JUST CAN'T MAKE MYSELF SEE IT THAT WAY!
WOK!
3

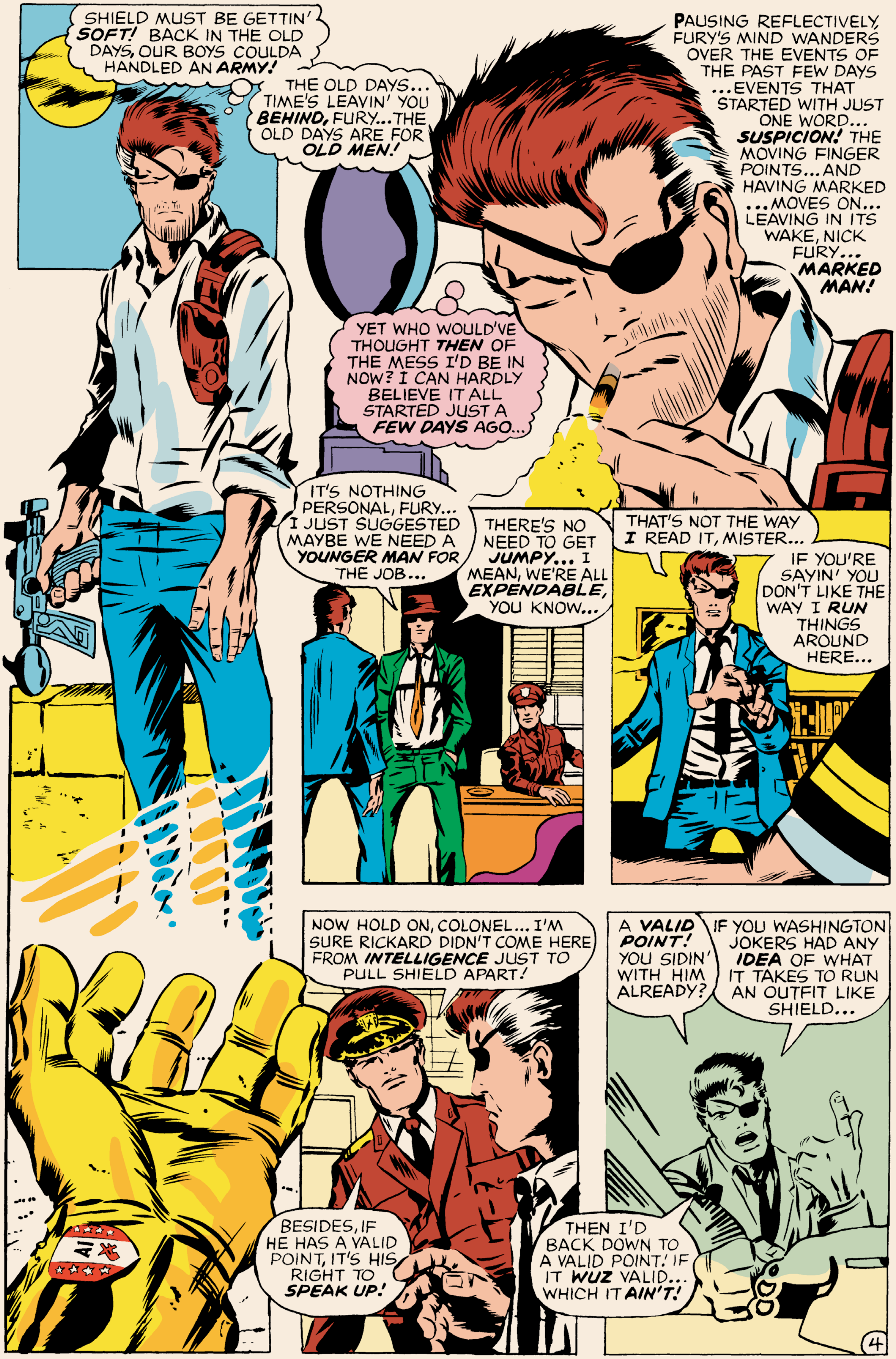

I OUGHTTA CALL THE LAW AND LET YA SPEND CHRISTMAS IN THE CAN--BUT, SINCE I'M SO BIG-HEARTED...
...I'M GONNA HOPE I TAUGHT YOU A LESSON, AND SEND YA HOME TO YER MOMMAS--JUST SO YA DON'T MISS OUT ON SANTA CLAUS!
EVEN THOUGH I WOULDN'T BET ON 'IM PAYIN' A VISIT TO A BUNCH'A PUNKS LIKE YOU!
NOW GET PACKIN' OUTTA HERE--BEFORE I LOSE MY TEMPER AND STOP BEIN' MY LOVABLE GOOD-NATURED SELF!
OH, AND YA BETTER THINK TWICE BEFORE YA PUT THE ARM ON NICK FURY AGAIN!
FURY? LET'S SHAG! YA JUST DON'T MESS WITH JOKERS LIKE HIM!
AND, AS THE YOUNG THUGS DISAPPEAR INTO THE DAMP GREY TWILIGHT...
WELL, FURY--AT LEAST YOU'VE MADE SOMEBODY'S CHRISTMAS MERRIER--BY KEEPIN' 'EM FROM GETTIN' MUGGED!
DON'T LEAVE MUCH FOR ME, THOUGH! ALL I CAN DO IS GO HOME TO A COLD, EMPTY APARTMENT!
WHILE THE REST'A THE WORLD'S LIVIN' IT UP, ALL THERE IS FOR ME TO DO IS GO HOME AND WATCH TV,.. ALONE!
IF IT WUZN'T FOR SEEIN' THOSE KIDS EYES ALL LIT UP, THIS CHRISTMAS'D BE THE BIGGEST BUST YET!
AWWW, YOU'RE JUST FEELIN' SORRY FOR YOURSELF, FURY! IF EVEN ONE FAMILY CAN BE AS HAPPY AS THAT ONE IN THERE...
...IN TIMES LIKE THIS, THEN IT'S ALL GOTTA BE WORTHWHILE!
THEN, AFTER A LONG CAB RIDE ACROSS TOWN, NICK FURY FINALLY ARRIVES AT THE PLACE HE CALLS HOME...
I'LL JUST GO IN AND RACK OUT! AFTER A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP... THINGS'VE GOTTA LOOK BETTER!
GUESS WHO...?!
HUH...?! WITH HANDS LIKE THAT, IT'S JUST GOTTA BE... VAL!
4

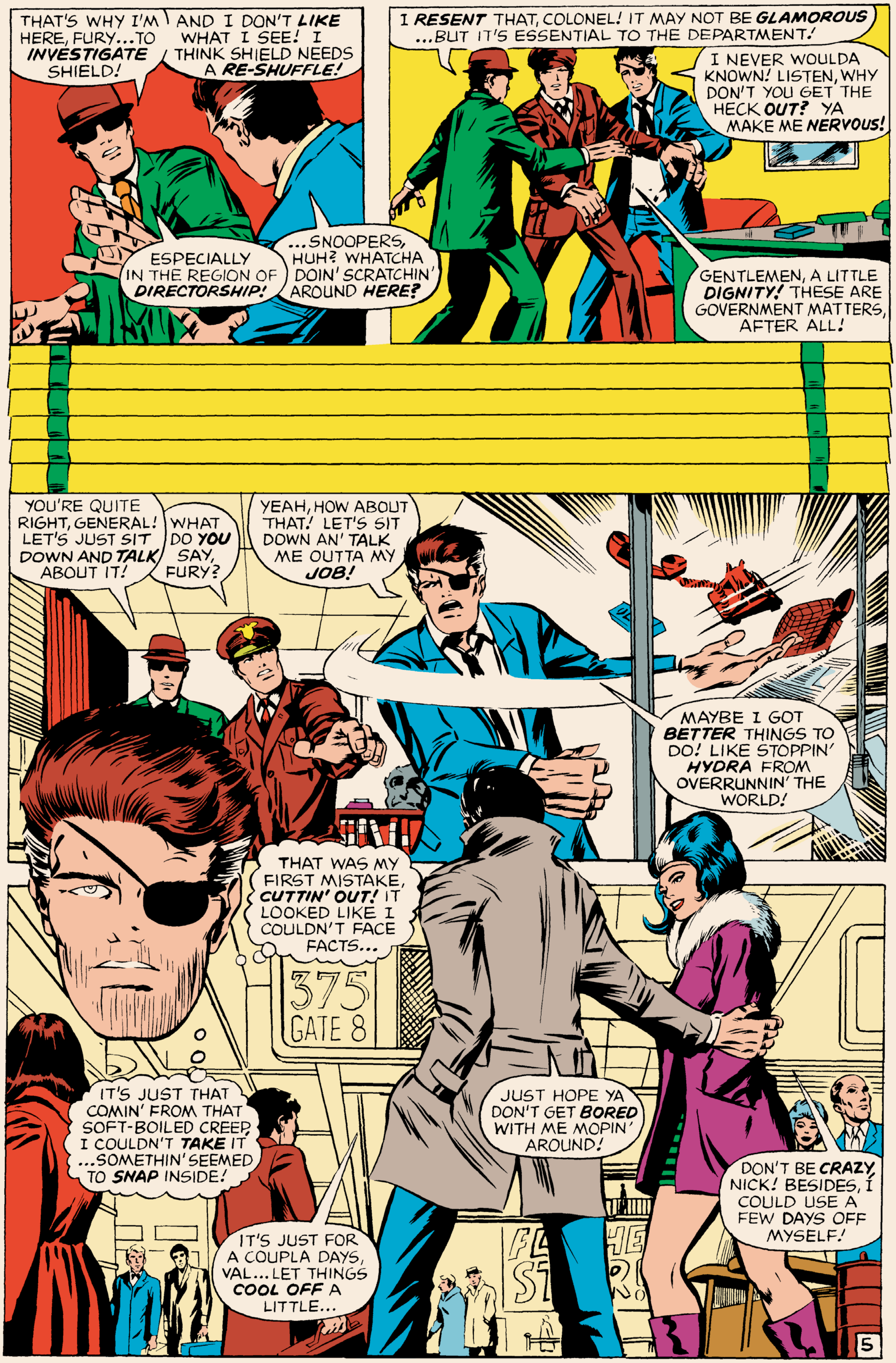

S.H.I.E.L.D.
12¢
IND.
11
APR
NICK FURY, AGENT OF...
SHIELD™
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY

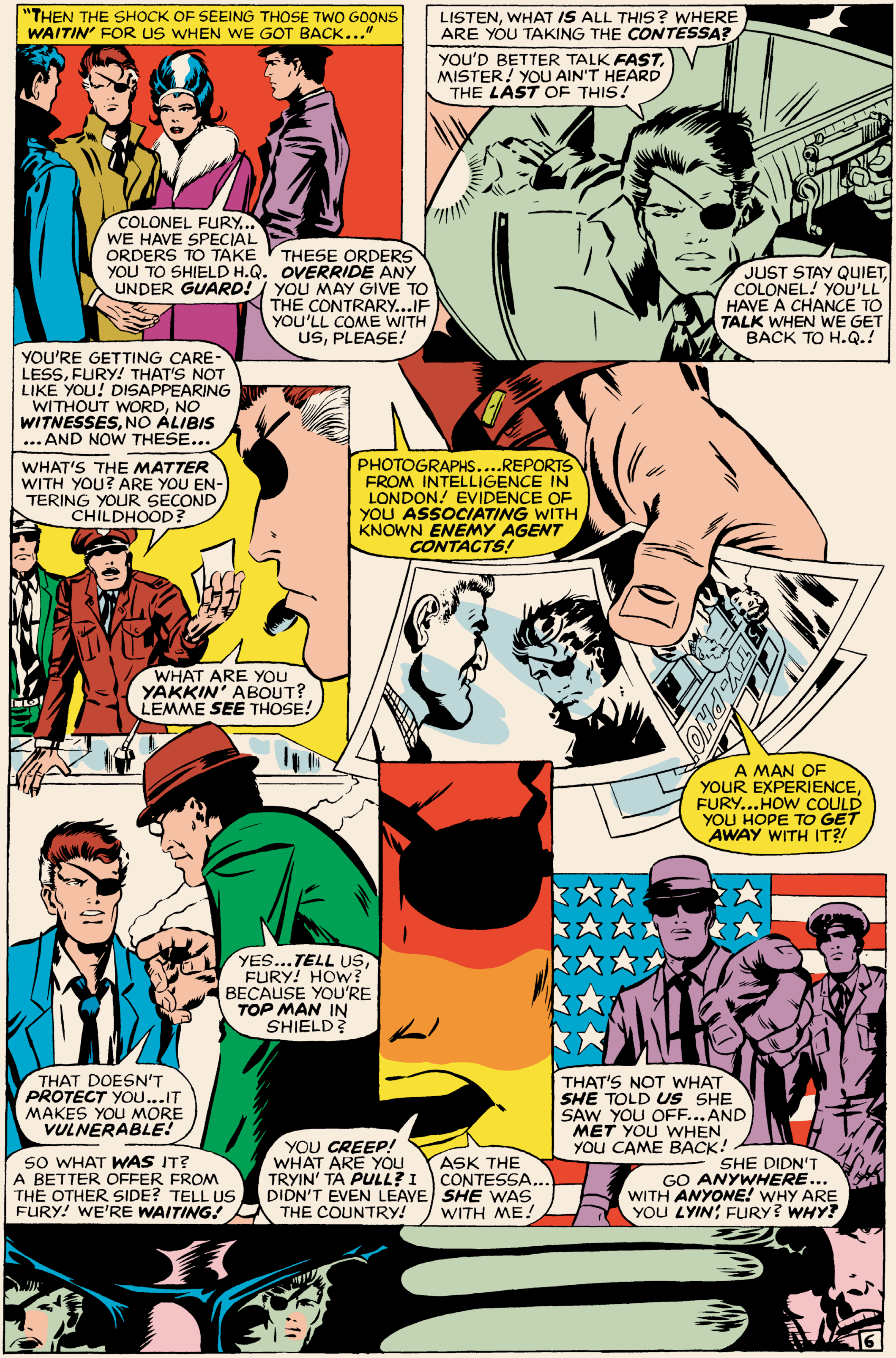

HELL HATH NO FURY
...TARGET FURY..
2!
4!
—FIRE FIRE...
EDITOR: STAN LEE
WRITER: STEVE PARKHOUSE
PENCILLER: BARRY SMITH
INKED BY: BARRY SMITH SID GREENE
LETTERER: I. WATANABE

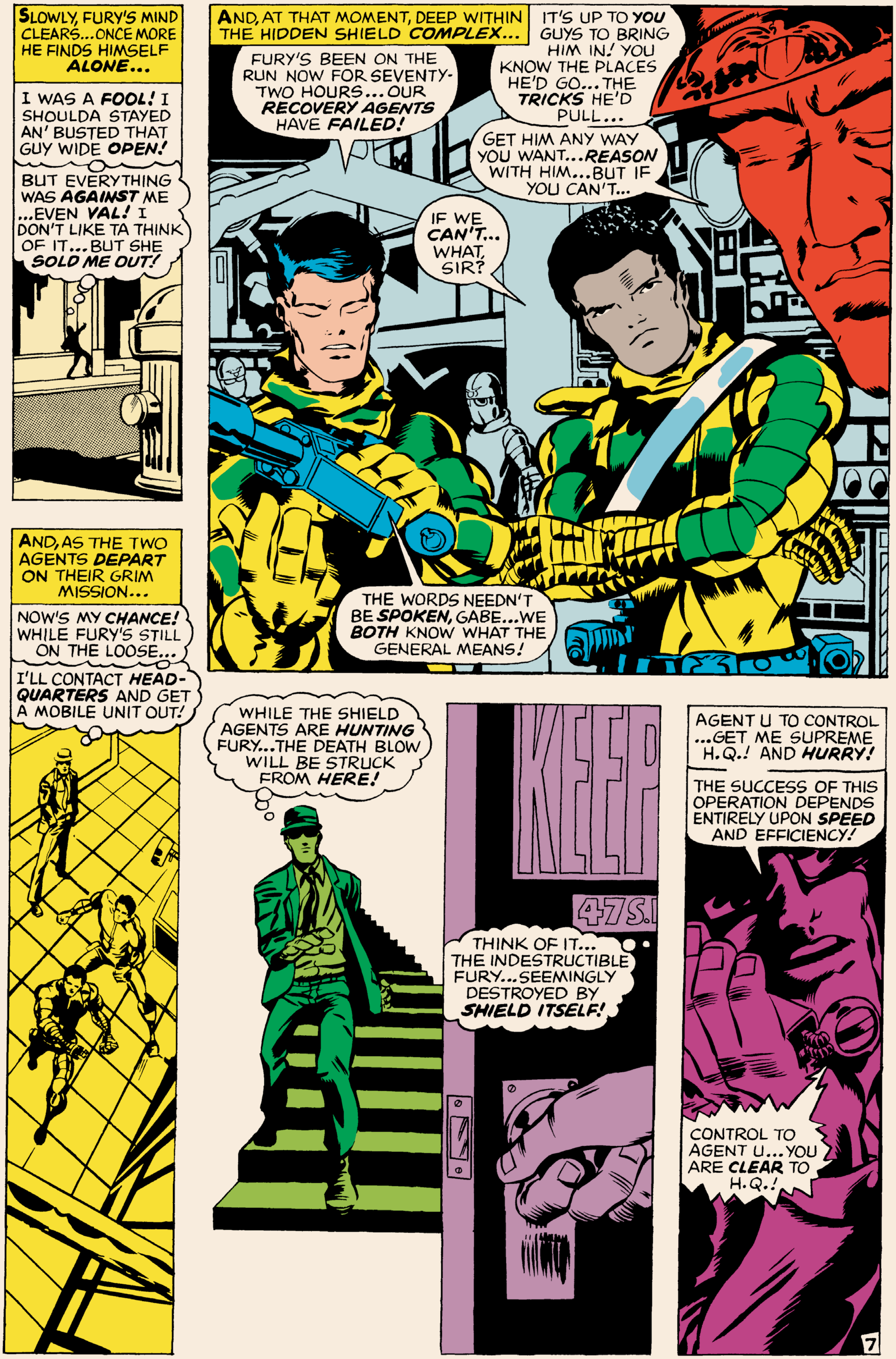

EXPLOSION! SHREDDING THE NIGHT WITH CRIMSON FLAME... A MAN WHO DEALS IN DEATH SIGHTS HIS ELUSIVE QUARRY ...AND...
STUN BLASTS! THEY'VE FOUND ME AGAIN!
SKAK!
MUST BE SOME KINDA WARNING SHOTS!
SOMEBODY OUGHTTA TELL 'EM THAT IN THIS GAME YOU NEVER LET A GUY OFF THE HOOK!
FALLOU
BUT NEVER!
2

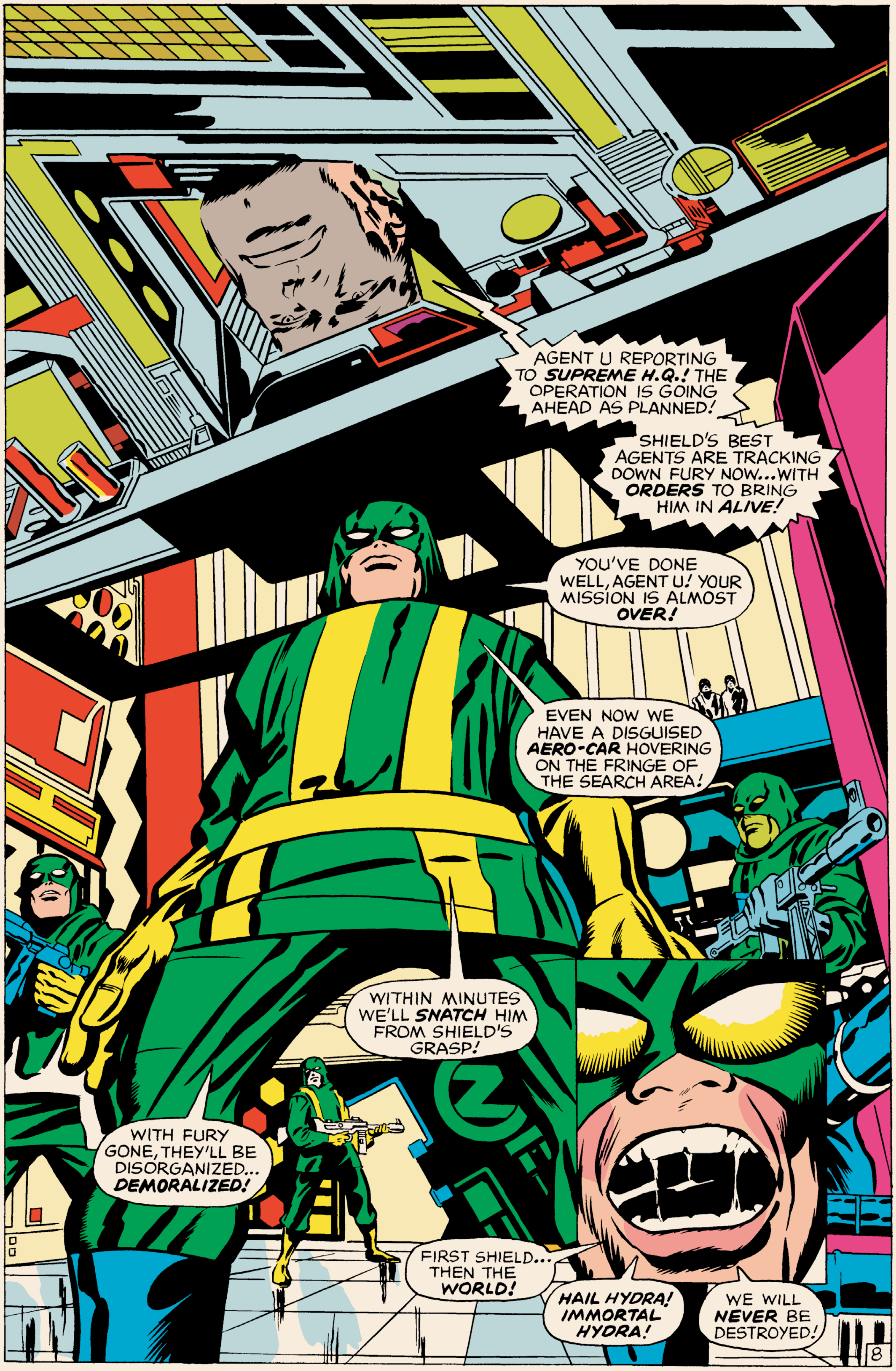

BUT...SCANT YARDS AWAY...THE ANONYMOUS ASSAILANTS PRESS ON...**RELENTLESS** IN THEIR PURSUIT...
SILENTLY...WE MUST GET **CLOSE** ENOUGH FOR THE STUN-GUNS TO HAVE AN EFFECT!
IF HE SLIPS THROUGH OUR CIRCLE **NOW,** WE'VE LOST HIM FOR GOOD!
A FAINT RATTLE...COMIN' FROM **BEHIND** ME!
I WAS **RIGHT!** TWO **MORE** OF 'EM COMIN' DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE!
TOO **CLOSE** FOR THE SONAR BEAM!
I'LL TRY A LITTLE TOUCH OF TONY STARK'S **REPULSOR** RAYS!
③

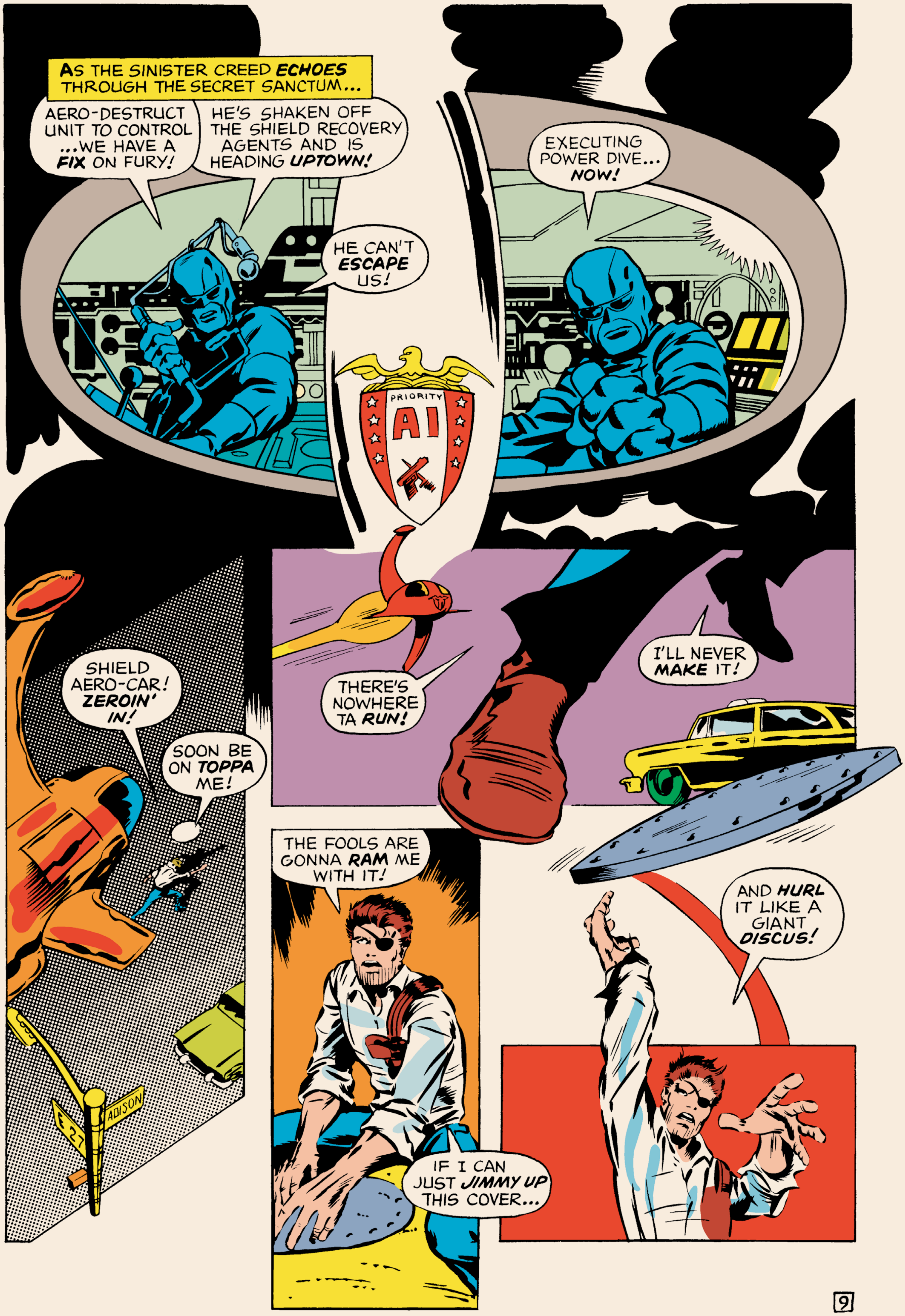

SHIELD MUST BE GETTIN' SOFT! BACK IN THE OLD DAYS, OUR BOYS COULDA HANDLED AN ARMY!
THE OLD DAYS... TIME'S LEAVIN' YOU BEHIND, FURY... THE OLD DAYS ARE FOR OLD MEN!
PAUSING REFLECTIVELY, FURY'S MIND WANDERS OVER THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS ...EVENTS THAT STARTED WITH JUST ONE WORD... SUSPICION! THE MOVING FINGER POINTS... AND HAVING MARKED ...MOVES ON... LEAVING IN ITS WAKE, NICK FURY... MARKED MAN!
YET WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT THEN OF THE MESS I'D BE IN NOW? I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE IT ALL STARTED JUST A FEW DAYS AGO...
IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL, FURY... I JUST SUGGESTED MAYBE WE NEED A YOUNGER MAN FOR THE JOB...
THERE'S NO NEED TO GET JUMPY... I MEAN, WE'RE ALL EXPENDABLE, YOU KNOW...
THAT'S NOT THE WAY I READ IT, MISTER...
IF YOU'RE SAYIN' YOU DON'T LIKE THE WAY I RUN THINGS AROUND HERE...
NOW HOLD ON, COLONEL... I'M SURE RICKARD DIDN'T COME HERE FROM INTELLIGENCE JUST TO PULL SHIELD APART!
BESIDES, IF HE HAS A VALID POINT, IT'S HIS RIGHT TO SPEAK UP!
A VALID POINT! YOU SIDIN' WITH HIM ALREADY?
IF YOU WASHINGTON JOKERS HAD ANY IDEA OF WHAT IT TAKES TO RUN AN OUTFIT LIKE SHIELD...
THEN I'D BACK DOWN TO A VALID POINT! IF IT WUZ VALID... WHICH IT AIN'T!
4

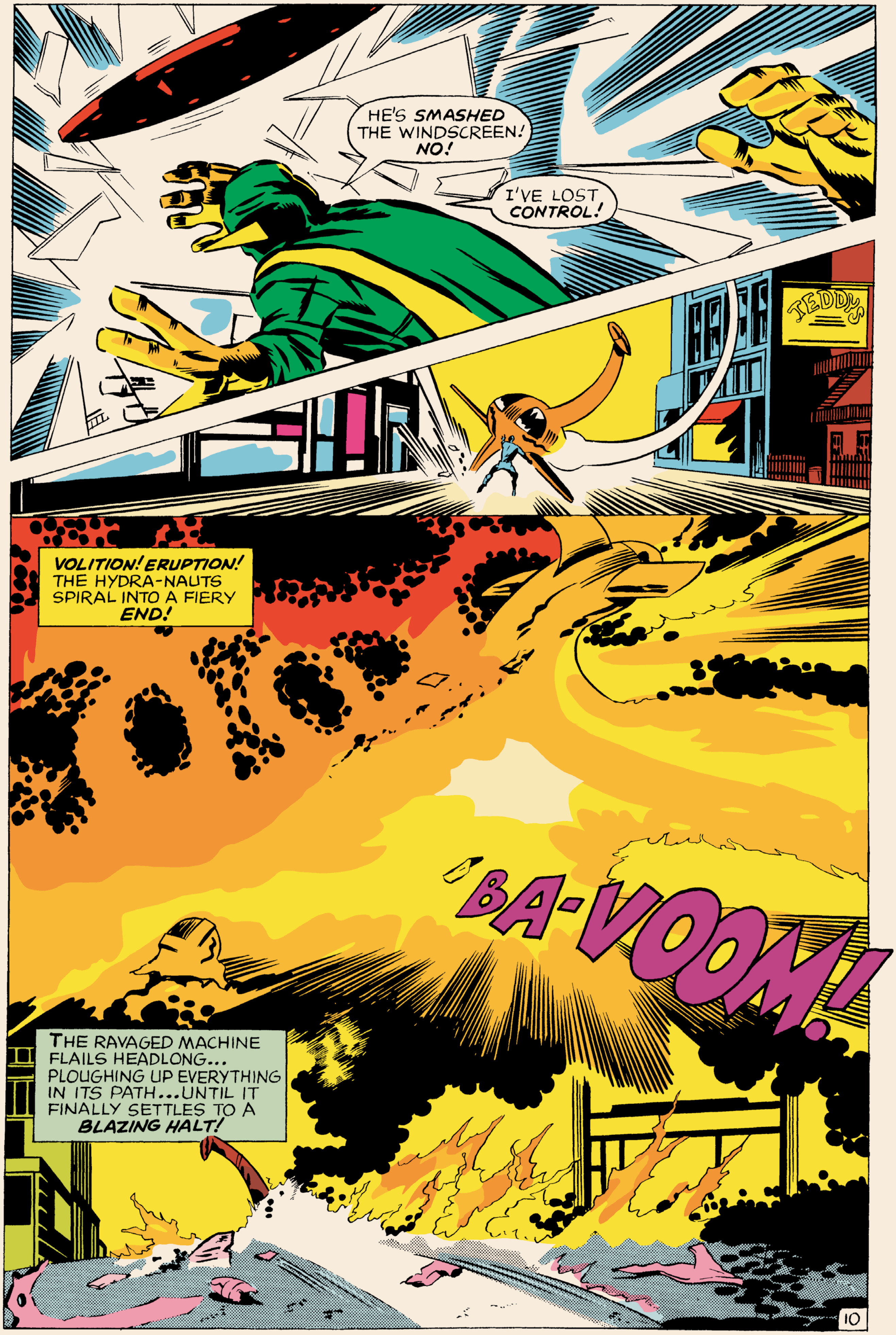

THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, FURY...TO *INVESTIGATE* SHIELD!
AND I DON'T *LIKE* WHAT I SEE! I THINK SHIELD NEEDS A *RE-SHUFFLE!*
ESPECIALLY IN THE REGION OF *DIRECTORSHIP!*
...SNOOPERS, HUH? WHATCHA DOIN' SCRATCHIN' AROUND *HERE?*
I *RESENT* THAT, COLONEL! IT MAY NOT BE *GLAMOROUS* ...BUT IT'S ESSENTIAL TO THE DEPARTMENT!
I NEVER WOULDA KNOWN! LISTEN, WHY DON'T YOU GET THE HECK *OUT?* YA MAKE ME *NERVOUS!*
GENTLEMEN, A LITTLE *DIGNITY!* THESE ARE GOVERNMENT MATTERS, AFTER ALL!
YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT, GENERAL! LET'S JUST SIT DOWN AND *TALK* ABOUT IT!
WHAT DO *YOU* SAY, FURY?
YEAH, HOW ABOUT THAT! LET'S SIT DOWN AN' *TALK* ME OUTTA MY *JOB!*
MAYBE I GOT *BETTER* THINGS TO DO! LIKE STOPPIN' *HYDRA* FROM OVERRUNNIN' THE WORLD!
THAT WAS MY FIRST MISTAKE, *CUTTIN' OUT!* IT LOOKED LIKE I COULDN'T FACE FACTS...
375 GATE 8
IT'S JUST THAT COMIN' FROM THAT SOFT-BOILED CREEP, I COULDN'T *TAKE* IT ...SOMETHIN' SEEMED TO *SNAP* INSIDE!
IT'S JUST FOR A COUPLA DAYS, VAL...LET THINGS *COOL OFF* A LITTLE...
JUST HOPE YA DON'T GET *BORED* WITH ME MOPIN' AROUND!
DON'T BE *CRAZY*, NICK! BESIDES, I COULD USE A FEW DAYS OFF MYSELF!
5

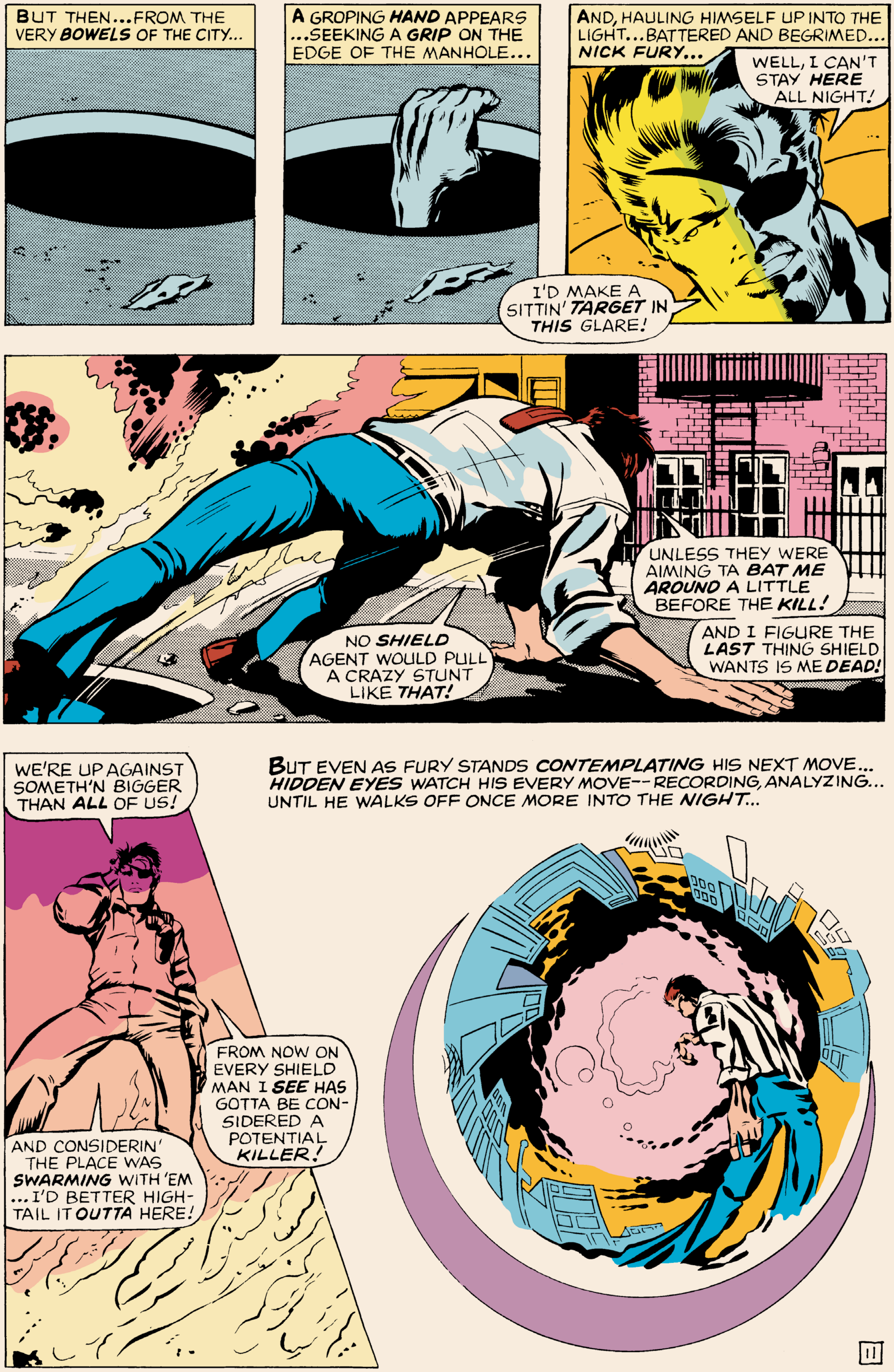

"THEN THE SHOCK OF SEEING THOSE TWO GOONS WAITIN' FOR US WHEN WE GOT BACK..."
COLONEL FURY.. WE HAVE SPECIAL ORDERS TO TAKE YOU TO SHIELD H.Q. UNDER GUARD!
THESE ORDERS OVERRIDE ANY YOU MAY GIVE TO THE CONTRARY...IF YOU'LL COME WITH US, PLEASE!
LISTEN, WHAT IS ALL THIS? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING THE CONTESSA?
YOU'D BETTER TALK FAST, MISTER! YOU AIN'T HEARD THE LAST OF THIS!
JUST STAY QUIET, COLONEL! YOU'LL HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK WHEN WE GET BACK TO H.Q.!
YOU'RE GETTING CARELESS, FURY! THAT'S NOT LIKE YOU! DISAPPEARING WITHOUT WORD, NO WITNESSES, NO ALIBIS ...AND NOW THESE...
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? ARE YOU ENTERING YOUR SECOND CHILDHOOD?
PHOTOGRAPHS....REPORTS FROM INTELLIGENCE IN LONDON! EVIDENCE OF YOU ASSOCIATING WITH KNOWN ENEMY AGENT CONTACTS!
WHAT ARE YOU YAKKIN' ABOUT? LEMME SEE THOSE!
A MAN OF YOUR EXPERIENCE, FURY...HOW COULD YOU HOPE TO GET AWAY WITH IT?!
YES...TELL US, FURY! HOW? BECAUSE YOU'RE TOP MAN IN SHIELD?
THAT DOESN'T PROTECT YOU...IT MAKES YOU MORE VULNERABLE!
SO WHAT WAS IT? A BETTER OFFER FROM THE OTHER SIDE? TELL US FURY! WE'RE WAITING!
YOU CREEP! WHAT ARE YOU TRYIN' TA PULL? I DIDN'T EVEN LEAVE THE COUNTRY!
ASK THE CONTESSA... SHE WAS WITH ME!
THAT'S NOT WHAT SHE TOLD US SHE SAW YOU OFF...AND MET YOU WHEN YOU CAME BACK!
SHE DIDN'T GO ANYWHERE... WITH ANYONE! WHY ARE YOU LYIN', FURY? WHY?
6

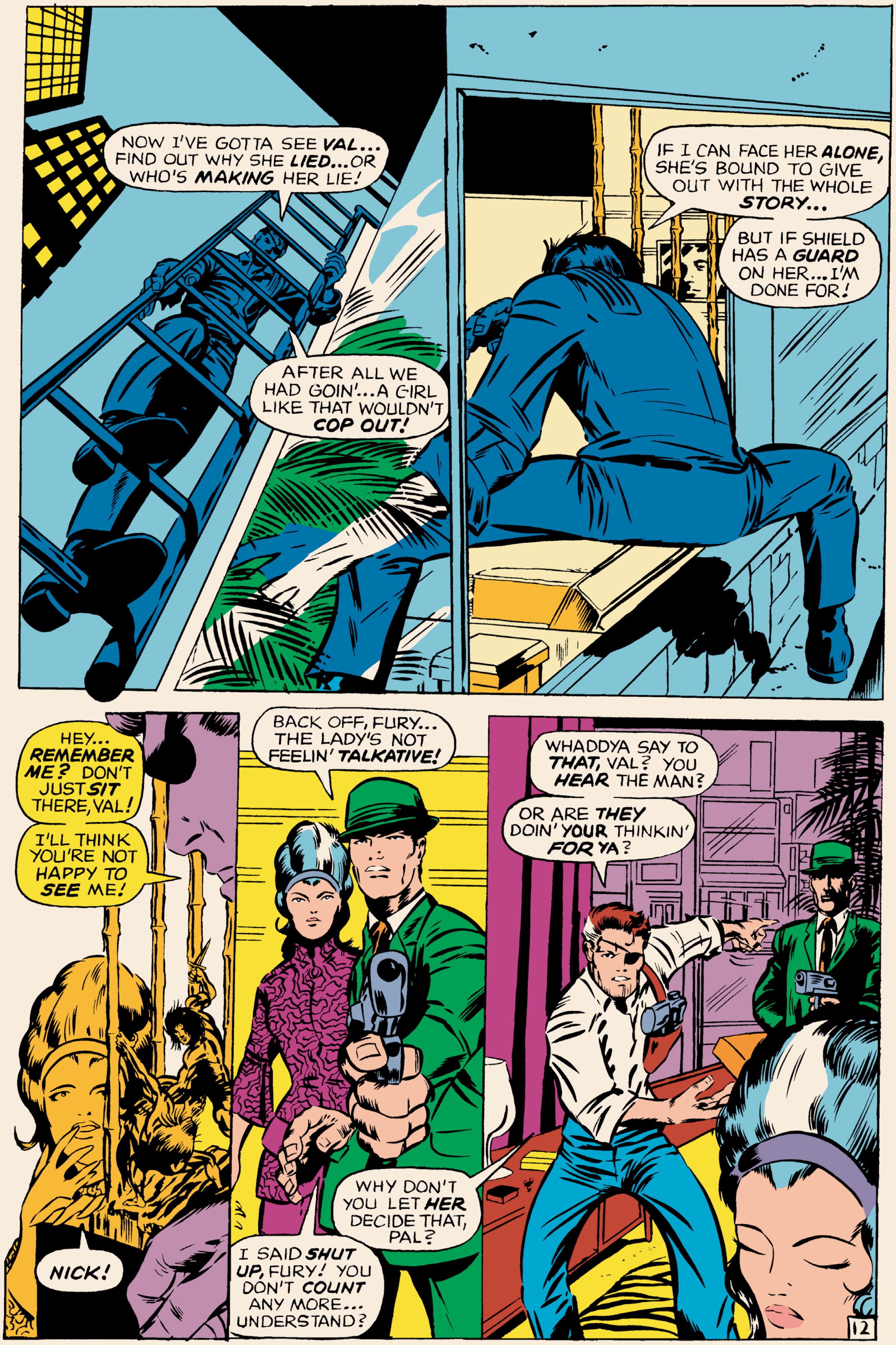

SLOWLY, FURY'S MIND CLEARS... ONCE MORE HE FINDS HIMSELF ALONE...
I WAS A FOOL! I SHOULDA STAYED AN' BUSTED THAT GUY WIDE OPEN!
BUT EVERYTHING WAS AGAINST ME ...EVEN VAL! I DON'T LIKE TA THINK OF IT... BUT SHE SOLD ME OUT!
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, DEEP WITHIN THE HIDDEN SHIELD COMPLEX...
FURY'S BEEN ON THE RUN NOW FOR SEVENTY-TWO HOURS... OUR RECOVERY AGENTS HAVE FAILED!
IT'S UP TO YOU GUYS TO BRING HIM IN! YOU KNOW THE PLACES HE'D GO... THE TRICKS HE'D PULL...
GET HIM ANY WAY YOU WANT... REASON WITH HIM... BUT IF YOU CAN'T...
IF WE CAN'T... WHAT, SIR?
THE WORDS NEEDN'T BE SPOKEN, GABE... WE BOTH KNOW WHAT THE GENERAL MEANS!
AND, AS THE TWO AGENTS DEPART ON THEIR GRIM MISSION...
NOW'S MY CHANCE! WHILE FURY'S STILL ON THE LOOSE...
I'LL CONTACT HEADQUARTERS AND GET A MOBILE UNIT OUT!
WHILE THE SHIELD AGENTS ARE HUNTING FURY... THE DEATH BLOW WILL BE STRUCK FROM HERE!
KEEP
47S.
THINK OF IT... THE INDESTRUCTIBLE FURY... SEEMINGLY DESTROYED BY SHIELD ITSELF!
AGENT U TO CONTROL ...GET ME SUPREME H.Q.! AND HURRY!
THE SUCCESS OF THIS OPERATION DEPENDS ENTIRELY UPON SPEED AND EFFICIENCY!
CONTROL TO AGENT U... YOU ARE CLEAR TO H.Q.!
7

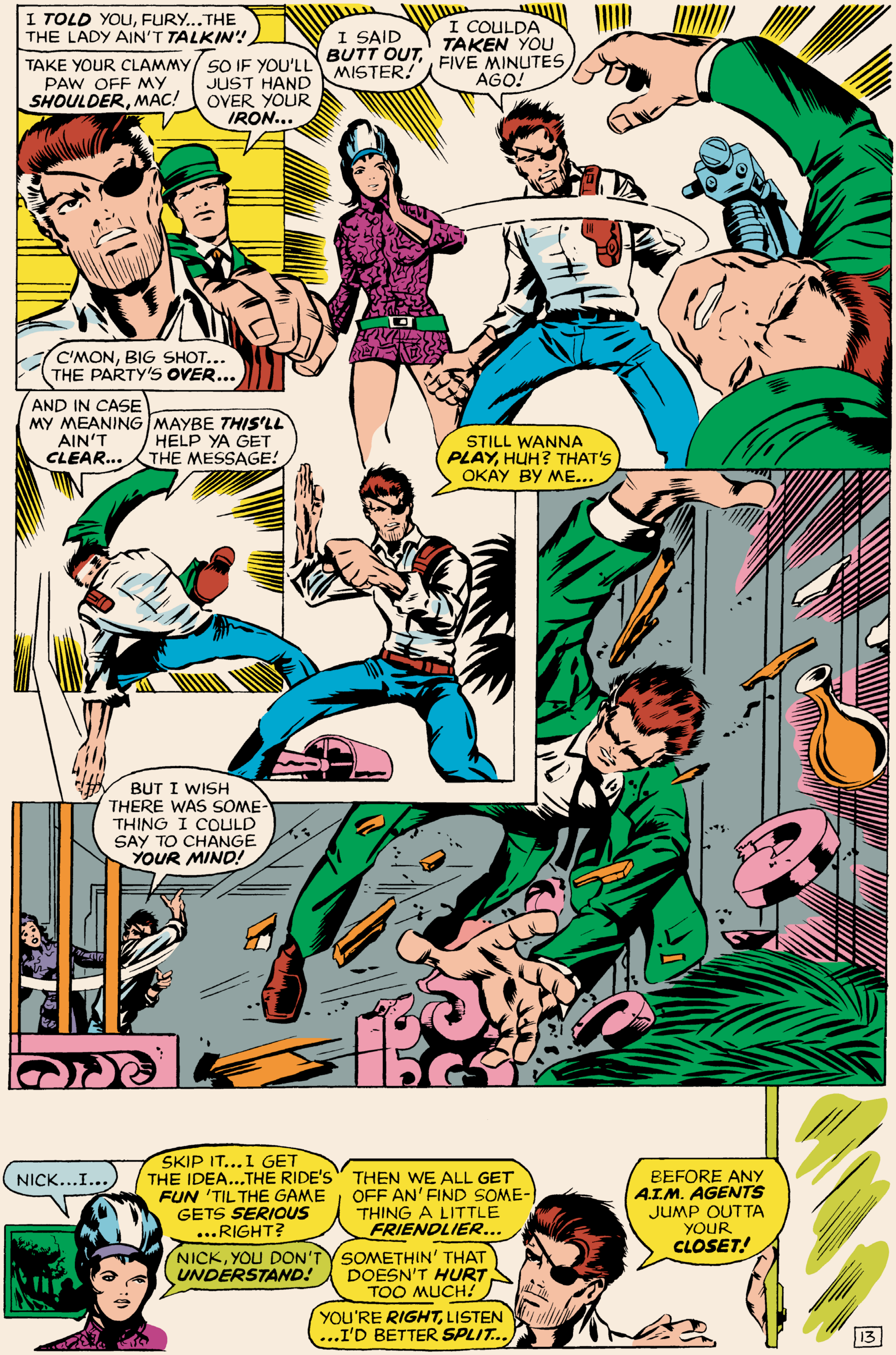

AGENT U REPORTING TO SUPREME H.Q.! THE OPERATION IS GOING AHEAD AS PLANNED!
SHIELD'S BEST AGENTS ARE TRACKING DOWN FURY NOW...WITH ORDERS TO BRING HIM IN ALIVE!
YOU'VE DONE WELL, AGENT U! YOUR MISSION IS ALMOST OVER!
EVEN NOW WE HAVE A DISGUISED AERO-CAR HOVERING ON THE FRINGE OF THE SEARCH AREA!
WITHIN MINUTES WE'LL SNATCH HIM FROM SHIELD'S GRASP!
WITH FURY GONE, THEY'LL BE DISORGANIZED... DEMORALIZED!
FIRST SHIELD... THEN THE WORLD!
HAIL HYDRA! IMMORTAL HYDRA!
WE WILL NEVER BE DESTROYED!
8

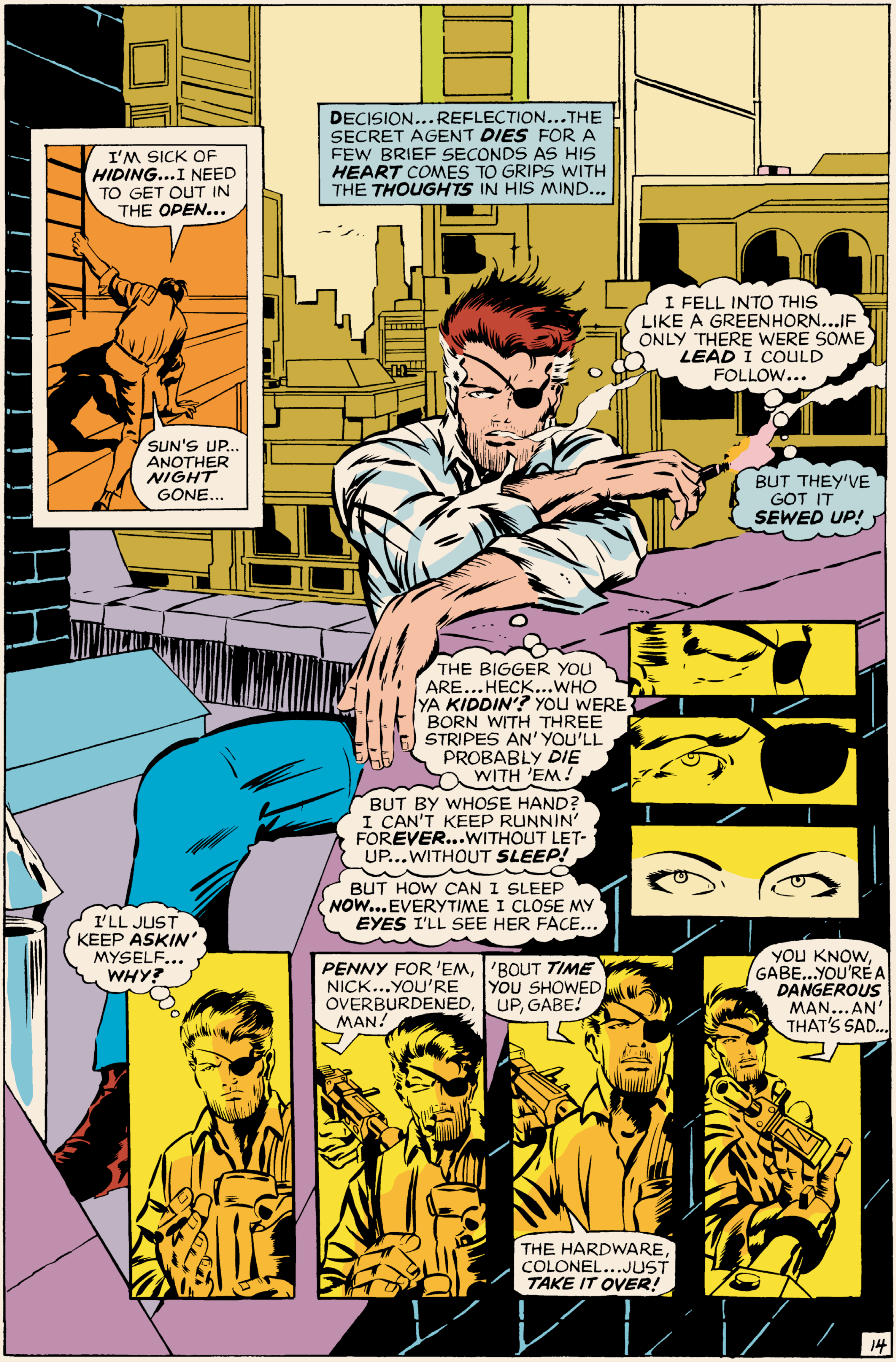

AS THE SINISTER CREED **ECHOES** THROUGH THE SECRET SANCTUM...
AERO-DESTRUCT UNIT TO CONTROL ...WE HAVE A **FIX** ON FURY!
HE'S SHAKEN OFF THE SHIELD RECOVERY AGENTS AND IS HEADING **UPTOWN!**
HE CAN'T **ESCAPE** US!
EXECUTING POWER DIVE... **NOW!**
PRIORITY
AI
SHIELD AERO-CAR! **ZEROIN' IN!**
SOON BE ON **TOPPA** ME!
THERE'S NOWHERE TA **RUN!**
I'LL NEVER **MAKE** IT!
E 27
ADISON
THE FOOLS ARE GONNA **RAM** ME WITH IT!
IF I CAN JUST **JIMMY UP** THIS COVER...
AND **HURL** IT LIKE A GIANT **DISCUS!**
9

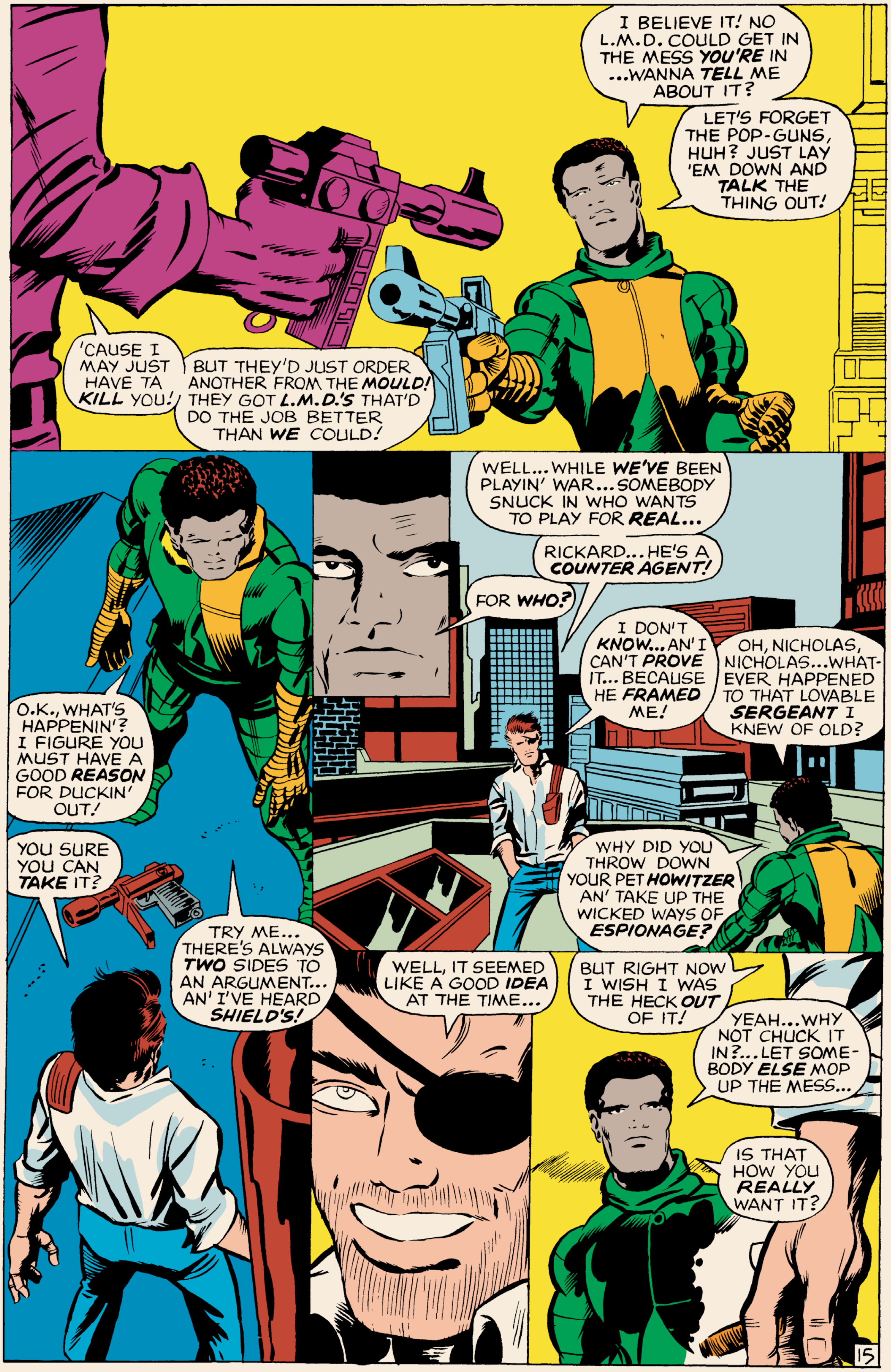

HE'S SMASHED THE WINDSCREEN! NO!
I'VE LOST CONTROL!
TEDDY'S
VOLITION! ERUPTION! THE HYDRA-NAUTS SPIRAL INTO A FIERY END!
BA-VOOM!
THE RAVAGED MACHINE FLAILS HEADLONG... PLOUGHING UP EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH...UNTIL IT FINALLY SETTLES TO A BLAZING HALT!
10

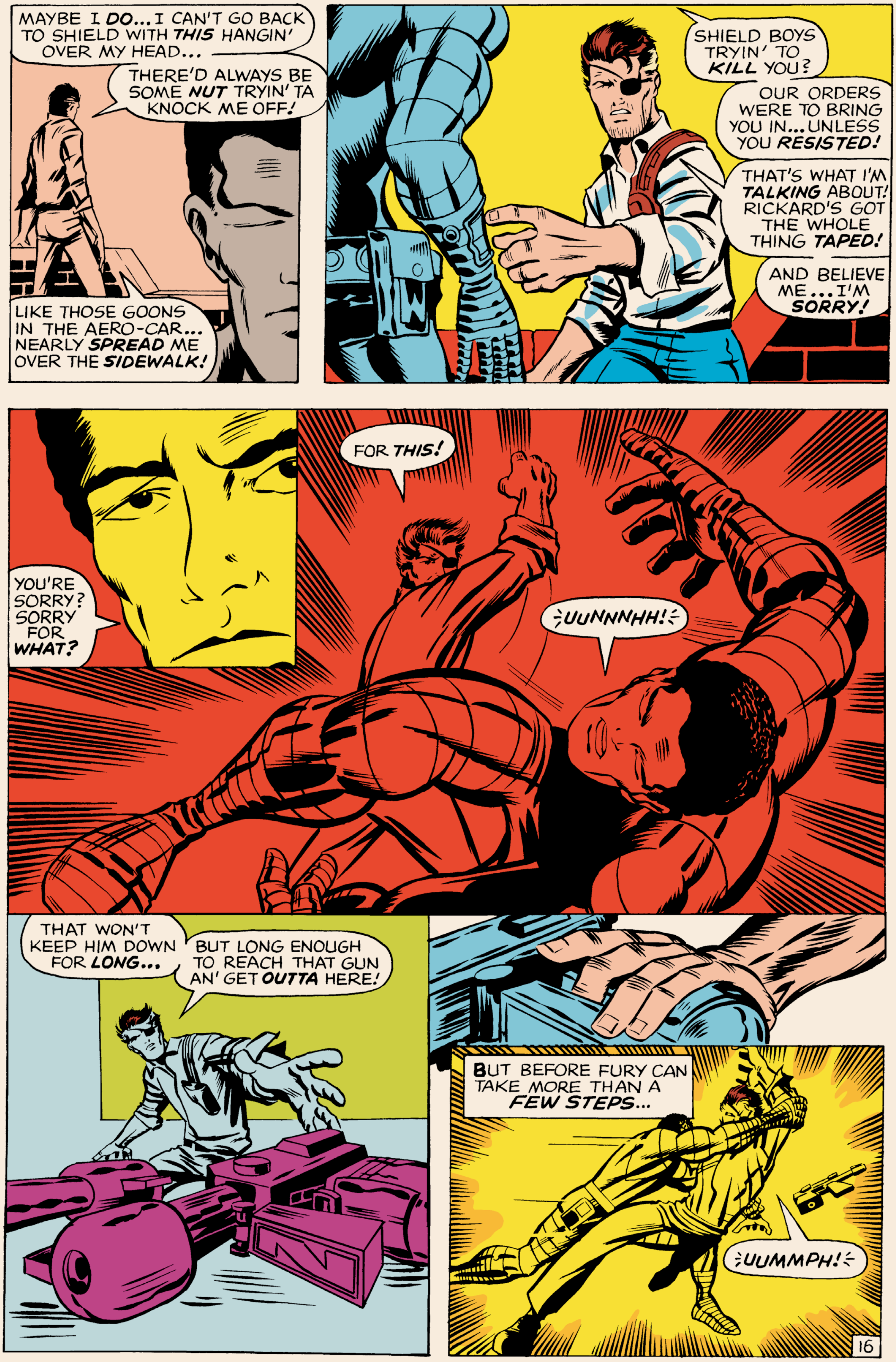

BUT THEN...FROM THE VERY BOWELS OF THE CITY...
A GROPING HAND APPEARS ...SEEKING A GRIP ON THE EDGE OF THE MANHOLE...
AND, HAULING HIMSELF UP INTO THE LIGHT...BATTERED AND BEGRIMED... NICK FURY...
WELL, I CAN'T STAY HERE ALL NIGHT!
I'D MAKE A SITTIN' TARGET IN THIS GLARE!
UNLESS THEY WERE AIMING TA BAT ME AROUND A LITTLE BEFORE THE KILL!
AND I FIGURE THE LAST THING SHIELD WANTS IS ME DEAD!
NO SHIELD AGENT WOULD PULL A CRAZY STUNT LIKE THAT!
WE'RE UP AGAINST SOMETH'N BIGGER THAN ALL OF US!
FROM NOW ON EVERY SHIELD MAN I SEE HAS GOTTA BE CONSIDERED A POTENTIAL KILLER!
AND CONSIDERIN' THE PLACE WAS SWARMING WITH 'EM ...I'D BETTER HIGH-TAIL IT OUTTA HERE!
BUT EVEN AS FURY STANDS CONTEMPLATING HIS NEXT MOVE... HIDDEN EYES WATCH HIS EVERY MOVE--RECORDING, ANALYZING... UNTIL HE WALKS OFF ONCE MORE INTO THE NIGHT...
11

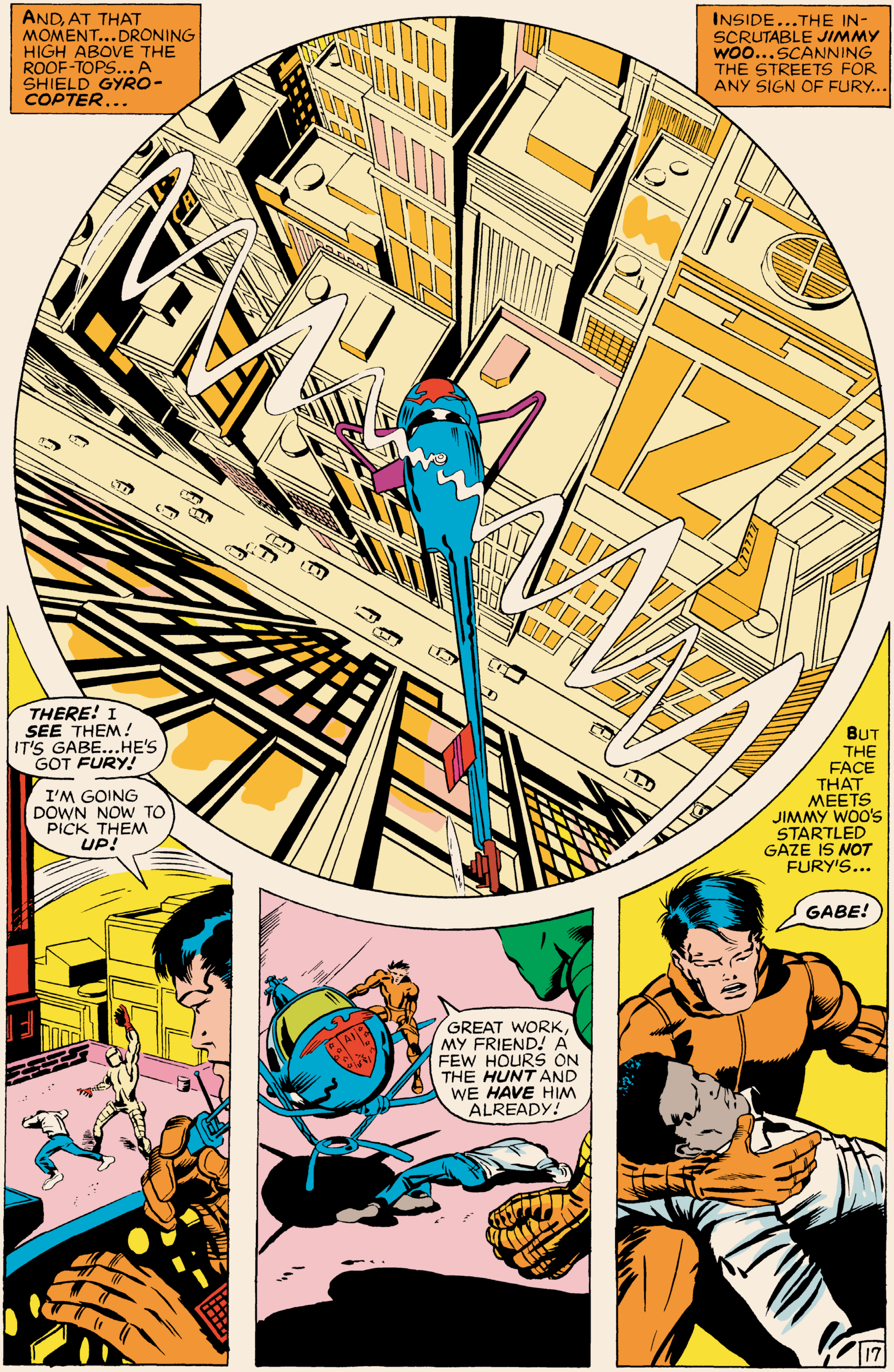

NOW I'VE GOTTA SEE VAL... FIND OUT WHY SHE LIED...OR WHO'S MAKING HER LIE!
AFTER ALL WE HAD GOIN'...A GIRL LIKE THAT WOULDN'T COP OUT!
IF I CAN FACE HER ALONE, SHE'S BOUND TO GIVE OUT WITH THE WHOLE STORY...
BUT IF SHIELD HAS A GUARD ON HER...I'M DONE FOR!
HEY... REMEMBER ME? DON'T JUST SIT THERE, VAL!
I'LL THINK YOU'RE NOT HAPPY TO SEE ME!
NICK!
BACK OFF, FURY... THE LADY'S NOT FEELIN' TALKATIVE!
WHY DON'T YOU LET HER DECIDE THAT, PAL?
I SAID SHUT UP, FURY! YOU DON'T COUNT ANY MORE... UNDERSTAND?
WHADDYA SAY TO THAT, VAL? YOU HEAR THE MAN?
OR ARE THEY DOIN' YOUR THINKIN' FOR YA?
12

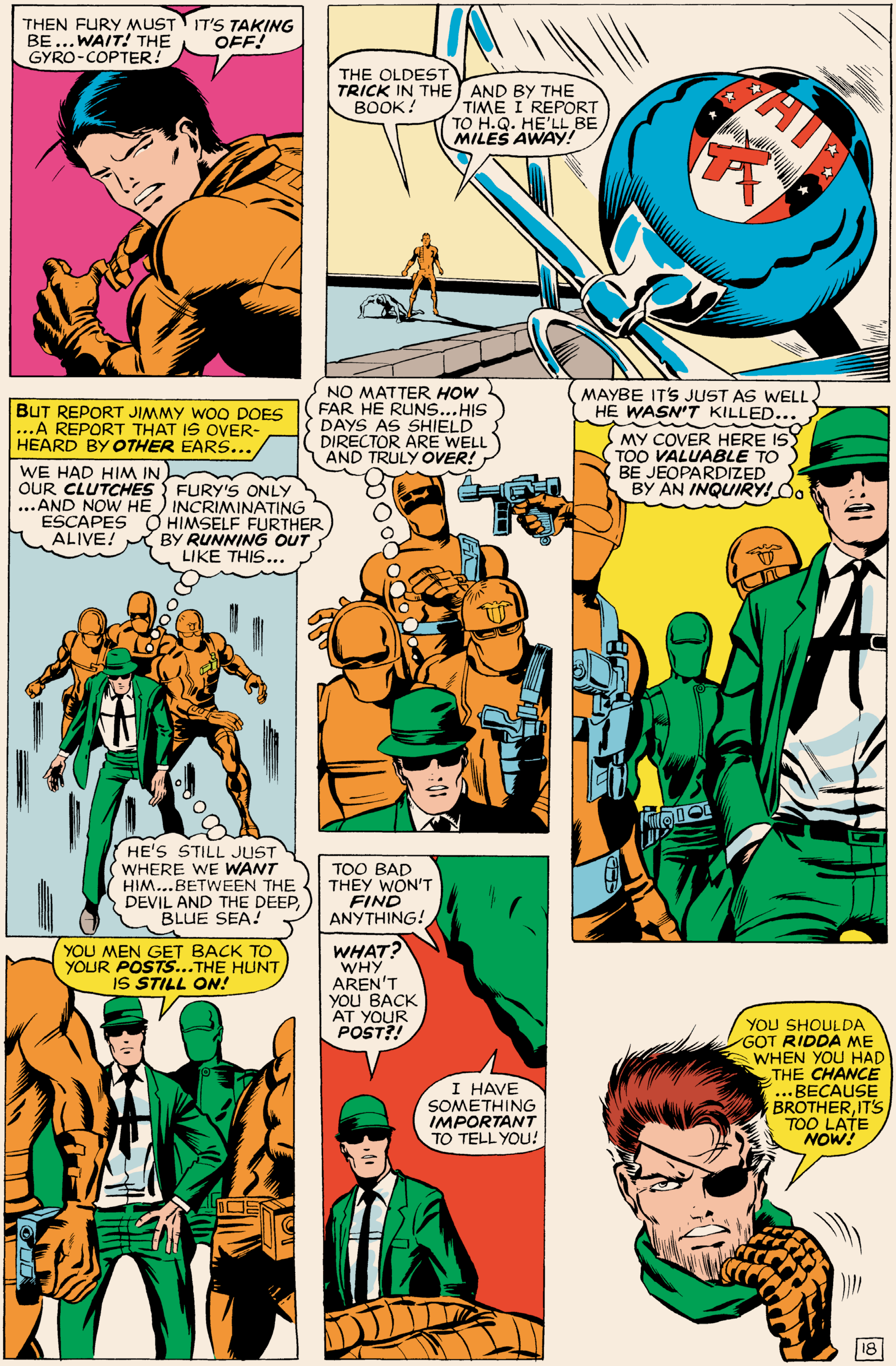

I TOLD YOU, FURY...THE THE LADY AIN'T TALKIN'!
TAKE YOUR CLAMMY PAW OFF MY SHOULDER, MAC!
SO IF YOU'LL JUST HAND OVER YOUR IRON...
C'MON, BIG SHOT... THE PARTY'S OVER...
I SAID BUTT OUT, MISTER!
I COULDA TAKEN YOU FIVE MINUTES AGO!
AND IN CASE MY MEANING AIN'T CLEAR...
MAYBE THIS'LL HELP YA GET THE MESSAGE!
STILL WANNA PLAY, HUH? THAT'S OKAY BY ME...
BUT I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD SAY TO CHANGE YOUR MIND!
NICK...I...
SKIP IT...I GET THE IDEA...THE RIDE'S FUN 'TIL THE GAME GETS SERIOUS ...RIGHT?
NICK, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
THEN WE ALL GET OFF AN' FIND SOMETHING A LITTLE FRIENDLIER...
SOMETHIN' THAT DOESN'T HURT TOO MUCH!
YOU'RE RIGHT, LISTEN ...I'D BETTER SPLIT...
BEFORE ANY A.I.M. AGENTS JUMP OUTTA YOUR CLOSET!
13

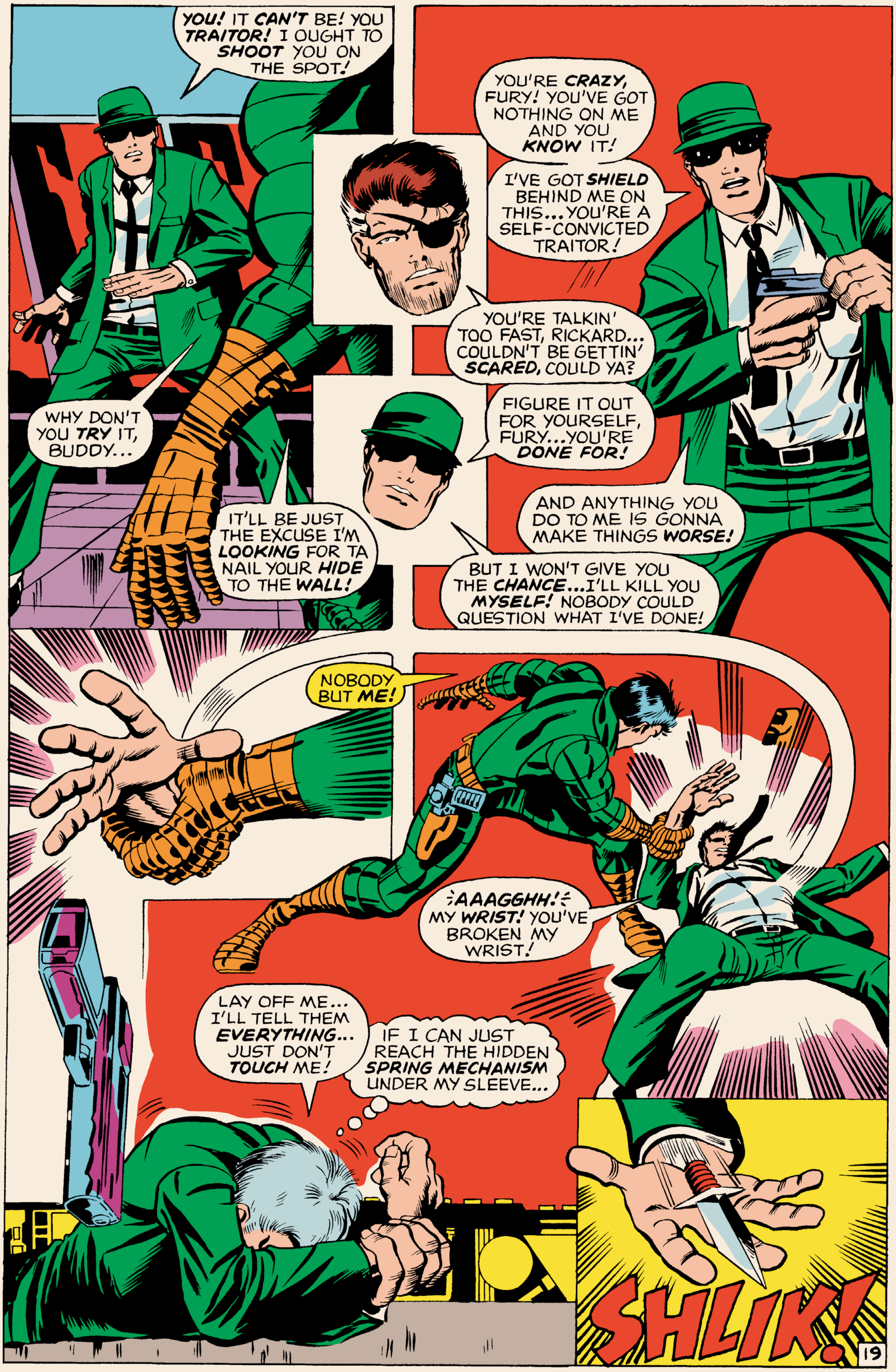

I'M SICK OF HIDING...I NEED TO GET OUT IN THE OPEN...
SUN'S UP... ANOTHER NIGHT GONE...
DECISION...REFLECTION...THE SECRET AGENT DIES FOR A FEW BRIEF SECONDS AS HIS HEART COMES TO GRIPS WITH THE THOUGHTS IN HIS MIND...
I FELL INTO THIS LIKE A GREENHORN...IF ONLY THERE WERE SOME LEAD I COULD FOLLOW...
BUT THEY'VE GOT IT SEWED UP!
THE BIGGER YOU ARE...HECK...WHO YA KIDDIN'? YOU WERE BORN WITH THREE STRIPES AN' YOU'LL PROBABLY DIE WITH 'EM!
BUT BY WHOSE HAND? I CAN'T KEEP RUNNIN' FOREVER...WITHOUT LET-UP...WITHOUT SLEEP!
BUT HOW CAN I SLEEP NOW...EVERYTIME I CLOSE MY EYES I'LL SEE HER FACE...
I'LL JUST KEEP ASKIN' MYSELF... WHY?
PENNY FOR 'EM, NICK...YOU'RE OVERBURDENED, MAN!
'BOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP, GABE!
THE HARDWARE, COLONEL...JUST TAKE IT OVER!
YOU KNOW, GABE...YOU'RE A DANGEROUS MAN...AN' THAT'S SAD...
14

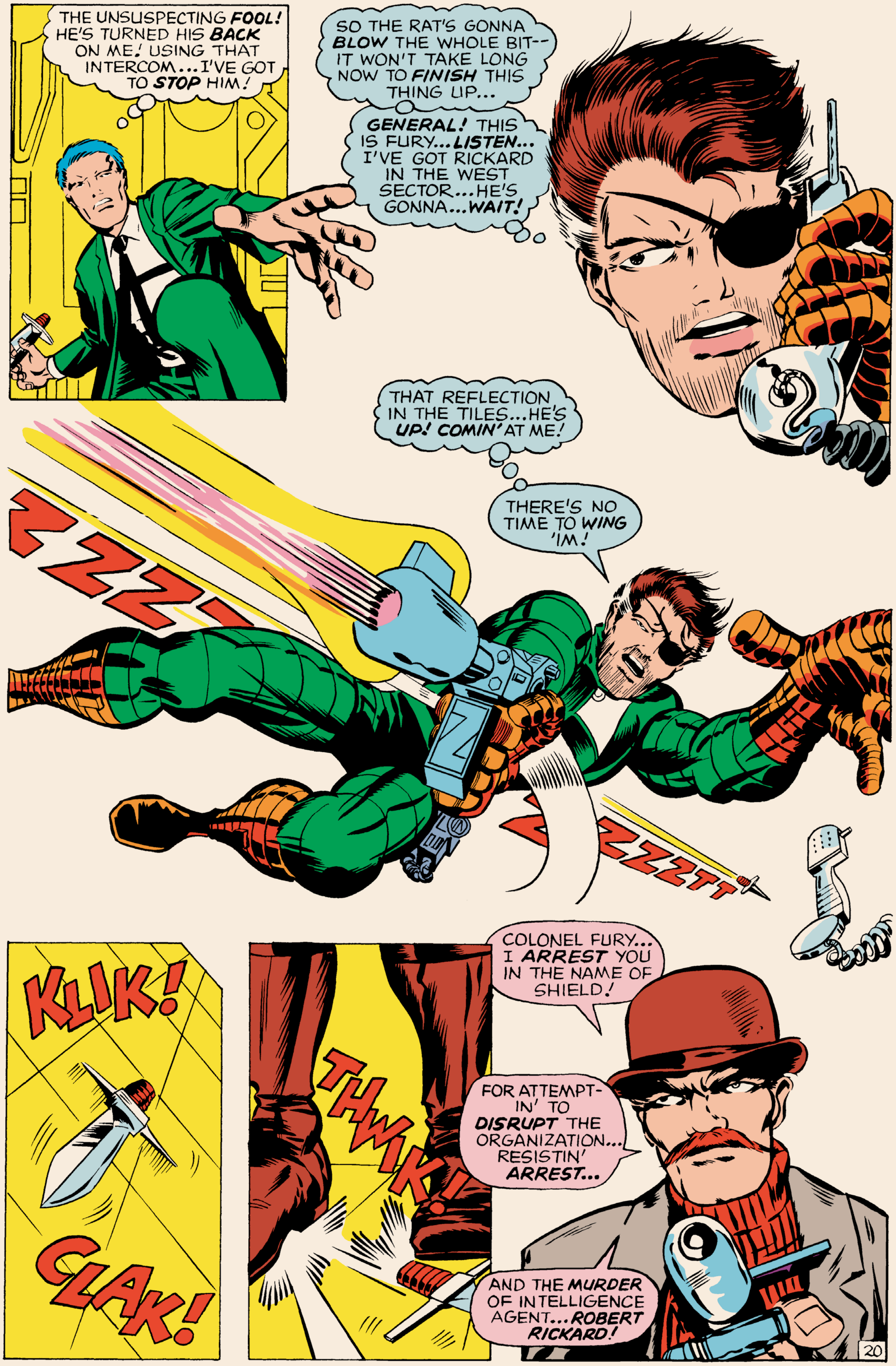

I BELIEVE IT! NO L.M.D. COULD GET IN THE MESS *YOU'RE* IN ...WANNA *TELL* ME ABOUT IT?
LET'S FORGET THE POP-GUNS, HUH? JUST LAY 'EM DOWN AND *TALK* THE THING OUT!
'CAUSE I MAY JUST HAVE TA *KILL* YOU!
BUT THEY'D JUST ORDER ANOTHER FROM THE *MOULD!* THEY GOT *L.M.D.'S* THAT'D DO THE JOB BETTER THAN *WE* COULD!
O.K., WHAT'S HAPPENIN'? I FIGURE YOU MUST HAVE A GOOD *REASON* FOR DUCKIN' OUT!
YOU SURE YOU CAN *TAKE* IT?
TRY ME... THERE'S ALWAYS *TWO* SIDES TO AN ARGUMENT... AN' I'VE HEARD *SHIELD'S!*
WELL... WHILE *WE'VE* BEEN PLAYIN' WAR... SOMEBODY SNUCK IN WHO WANTS TO PLAY FOR *REAL...*
RICKARD... HE'S A *COUNTER AGENT!*
FOR *WHO?*
I DON'T *KNOW...* AN' I CAN'T *PROVE* IT... BECAUSE HE *FRAMED* ME!
OH, NICHOLAS, NICHOLAS... WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THAT LOVABLE *SERGEANT* I KNEW OF OLD?
WHY DID YOU THROW DOWN YOUR PET *HOWITZER* AN' TAKE UP THE WICKED WAYS OF *ESPIONAGE?*
WELL, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD *IDEA* AT THE TIME...
BUT RIGHT NOW I WISH I WAS THE HECK *OUT* OF IT!
YEAH... WHY NOT CHUCK IT IN?... LET SOMEBODY *ELSE* MOP UP THE MESS...
IS THAT HOW YOU *REALLY* WANT IT?
15


MAYBE I DO... I CAN'T GO BACK TO SHIELD WITH THIS HANGIN' OVER MY HEAD...
THERE'D ALWAYS BE SOME NUT TRYIN' TA KNOCK ME OFF!
LIKE THOSE GOONS IN THE AERO-CAR... NEARLY SPREAD ME OVER THE SIDEWALK!
SHIELD BOYS TRYIN' TO KILL YOU?
OUR ORDERS WERE TO BRING YOU IN... UNLESS YOU RESISTED!
THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT! RICKARD'S GOT THE WHOLE THING TAPED!
AND BELIEVE ME... I'M SORRY!
YOU'RE SORRY? SORRY FOR WHAT?
FOR THIS!
UUNNNHH!
THAT WON'T KEEP HIM DOWN FOR LONG...
BUT LONG ENOUGH TO REACH THAT GUN AN' GET OUTTA HERE!
BUT BEFORE FURY CAN TAKE MORE THAN A FEW STEPS...
UUMMPH!
16


AND, AT THAT MOMENT... DRONING HIGH ABOVE THE ROOF-TOPS... A SHIELD GYRO-COPTER...
INSIDE... THE INSCRUTABLE JIMMY WOO... SCANNING THE STREETS FOR ANY SIGN OF FURY...
THERE! I SEE THEM! IT'S GABE... HE'S GOT FURY!
I'M GOING DOWN NOW TO PICK THEM UP!
GREAT WORK, MY FRIEND! A FEW HOURS ON THE HUNT AND WE HAVE HIM ALREADY!
BUT THE FACE THAT MEETS JIMMY WOO'S STARTLED GAZE IS NOT FURY'S...
GABE!
17


THEN FURY MUST BE...WAIT! THE GYRO-COPTER!
IT'S TAKING OFF!
THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK!
AND BY THE TIME I REPORT TO H.Q. HE'LL BE MILES AWAY!
BUT REPORT JIMMY WOO DOES ...A REPORT THAT IS OVERHEARD BY OTHER EARS...
WE HAD HIM IN OUR CLUTCHES ...AND NOW HE ESCAPES ALIVE!
FURY'S ONLY INCRIMINATING HIMSELF FURTHER BY RUNNING OUT LIKE THIS...
HE'S STILL JUST WHERE WE WANT HIM...BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP, BLUE SEA!
NO MATTER HOW FAR HE RUNS...HIS DAYS AS SHIELD DIRECTOR ARE WELL AND TRULY OVER!
MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL HE WASN'T KILLED...
MY COVER HERE IS TOO VALUABLE TO BE JEOPARDIZED BY AN INQUIRY!
YOU MEN GET BACK TO YOUR POSTS...THE HUNT IS STILL ON!
TOO BAD THEY WON'T FIND ANYTHING!
WHAT? WHY AREN'T YOU BACK AT YOUR POST?!
I HAVE SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU!
YOU SHOULDA GOT RIDDA ME WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE ...BECAUSE BROTHER, IT'S TOO LATE NOW!
18


YOU! IT CAN'T BE! YOU TRAITOR! I OUGHT TO SHOOT YOU ON THE SPOT!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT, BUDDY...
IT'LL BE JUST THE EXCUSE I'M LOOKING FOR TA NAIL YOUR HIDE TO THE WALL!
YOU'RE CRAZY, FURY! YOU'VE GOT NOTHING ON ME AND YOU KNOW IT!
I'VE GOT SHIELD BEHIND ME ON THIS...YOU'RE A SELF-CONVICTED TRAITOR!
YOU'RE TALKIN' TOO FAST, RICKARD... COULDN'T BE GETTIN' SCARED, COULD YA?
FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF, FURY...YOU'RE DONE FOR!
AND ANYTHING YOU DO TO ME IS GONNA MAKE THINGS WORSE!
BUT I WON'T GIVE YOU THE CHANCE...I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF! NOBODY COULD QUESTION WHAT I'VE DONE!
NOBODY BUT ME!
AAAGGHH! MY WRIST! YOU'VE BROKEN MY WRIST!
LAY OFF ME... I'LL TELL THEM EVERYTHING... JUST DON'T TOUCH ME!
IF I CAN JUST REACH THE HIDDEN SPRING MECHANISM UNDER MY SLEEVE...
SHLIK!
19


THE UNSUSPECTING FOOL! HE'S TURNED HIS BACK ON ME! USING THAT INTERCOM...I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!
SO THE RAT'S GONNA BLOW THE WHOLE BIT-- IT WON'T TAKE LONG NOW TO FINISH THIS THING UP...
GENERAL! THIS IS FURY...LISTEN... I'VE GOT RICKARD IN THE WEST SECTOR...HE'S GONNA...WAIT!
THAT REFLECTION IN THE TILES...HE'S UP! COMIN' AT ME!
THERE'S NO TIME TO WING 'IM!
ZZZZ
ZZZZZTTT
KLIK!
CLAK!
THWIK!
COLONEL FURY... I ARREST YOU IN THE NAME OF SHIELD!
FOR ATTEMPTIN' TO DISRUPT THE ORGANIZATION... RESISTIN' ARREST...
AND THE MURDER OF INTELLIGENCE AGENT...ROBERT RICKARD!
20

Windsor-Smith’s work on this series was reportedly interrupted after this issue by the expiration of his Green Card and his temporary return to England. A series of different creators attempted to keep the constantly shifting narrative on track for the final three issues of this Nick Fury solo title. Thought to be a traitor, Fury is arrested, escapes, and goes on the run before being overtaken by what is revealed to be a dream sequence. In the final issue of this series, Fury is assassinated at a Country Joe and the Fish concert (that’s right) but is revealed to be alive in a subsequent issue of The Avengers.

MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS • MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS • MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS

WONDROUS WORDS OF WIT AND WISDOM WITH WHICH TO WASTE SOME TIME!

ITEM! Mystery fans! If you're too impatient to wait till we reveal the secret of Infinity's identity in THE MIGHTY THOR, you'll find a clue in FANTASTIC FOUR #108. (It's subtle, and carefully hidden — but, we wanted to let you know.)

ITEM! If you've been wondering why you haven't seen too much of SAM ROSEN'S lettering in our mags lately, it's because he's been ill for a while. But, we just wanted to let his army of fans know that Sammy's on the mend again, and the whole happy Bullpen (including overworked ARTIE SIMEK) is glad to welcome him back.

ITEM! Talk about explosive events! Mighty Marvel was the toast of fandom when it presented, for the first time in comic-book form, the mind-staggering adventures of CONAN THE BARBARIAN, greatest of all sword-and-sorcery heroes. But now, another bombshell! In answer to an avalanche of requests, and because we wanna do it too, the current issue of CONAN heralds the first of a startling series of adaptations of the immortal Conan tales originally written by ROBERT E. HOWARD himself — creator of the battling Cimmerian! The thriller is "The Tower of the Elephant," earliest in setting of all Conan sagas — and, if you've savored it in the original, you won't wanna miss seeing how RASCALLY ROY and BASHFUL BARRY put it all together. And if you haven't read the R.E.H. original, then a real mind-boggling treat awaits you within the pages of CONAN #4! We kid thee not, by Crom!

ITEM! Just a word of advice to all you stalwarts who constantly bombard us with requests for subscriptions. We wouldn't know how to process a subscription if DR. DOOM himself was after it. All those momentous matters are referred to NIFTY NANCY MURPHY, who does her thing in an office which is like at the other end of the world! So, to save yourself a lot of time, and to save us the trouble of dragging your letters over to our mirthful Miss Murphy, why not address any request for subs directly to the gal in charge. Simply send your poignant little postal request to NANCY MURPHY, 625 MADISON AVE., NYC NY 10021. Then hang loose, hero. Your goodies will soon be on the way.

ITEM! Well, it's name-dropping time here at the Bullpen again, so let's let 'em drop where they may. We just had a real chatty visit from talented VIC GHIDALIA of ABC-TV. He dropped by to compliment us on the quality of our famous, far-out, fantasy yarns. (And ol' Vic oughtta know whereof he speaks. He's recently co-edited "BEWARE THE BEASTS" and "THE LITTLE MONSTERS," two of the newest, scariest pocket books around!) Vic was telling us that some of the biggest late-nite talk show hosts are bidding for a number of your Bullpenners to birghten up their talkfests. So, keep watching your local channels, hear? And, speaking of sports, which we weren't, don't dare miss the new issue of PRO, the magazine of the National Football League. Why? Because the cover features nine (Count 'em! Nine!) Marvel superheroes, and there is page after page of great, full-color illustrations by BIG JOHN BUSCEMA in which he draws our own costumed cavorters in the same poses as the NFL's legendary, lethal linebackers! It's not to be missed, mister! Now let's congratulate BOB RALEIGH JR., disc jockey on WPGC Radio, Washington, D.C., for being named by BILLBOARD as one of the top 25 air personalities in the U.S. (Bob also holds a Master's Degree — but doesn't every Marvel maniac?) Ol' Robert has had real flattering things to say about our fun-filled fables, and we thank him for all the unblushing bouquets he's given us over the airwaves. Also, a tip of the Marvel beanie-cap to all the Dee-Jays everywhere who've been quoting from our yarns and propagating the faith on their own swingin' shows. Hey, didja hear about our leader getting letters from two of the world's top film creators on the same day? The one from awesomely artistic ALAIN RESNAIS just broke us up as the great French director penned a zillion anecdotes about movie-making on the continent — but the other one, from the fabulous FEDERICO FELLINI, really took the cake. The world-famed maestro penned his letter in Italian, and poor Stan spent half the day racing around to get it translated. But you can bet your favorite fortune cookie, when he finally read it, it was more than worth the trouble. And now, a personal aside to both those master movie-makers: We'll always be grateful for your interest in our work, your valued friendship, and your enthusiastic awareness of the close relationship between our comic-books and the cinematic arts. Excelsior!

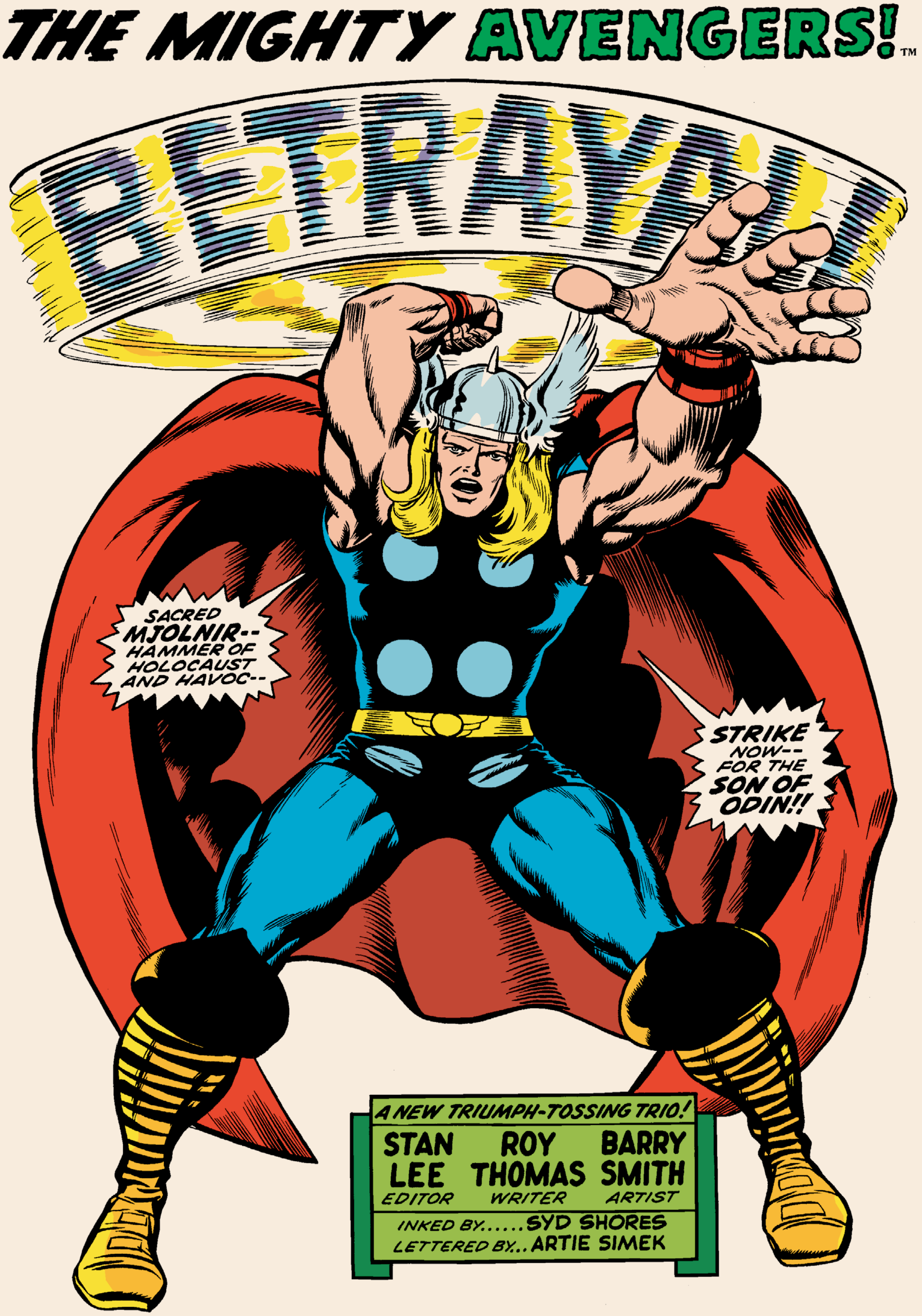
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

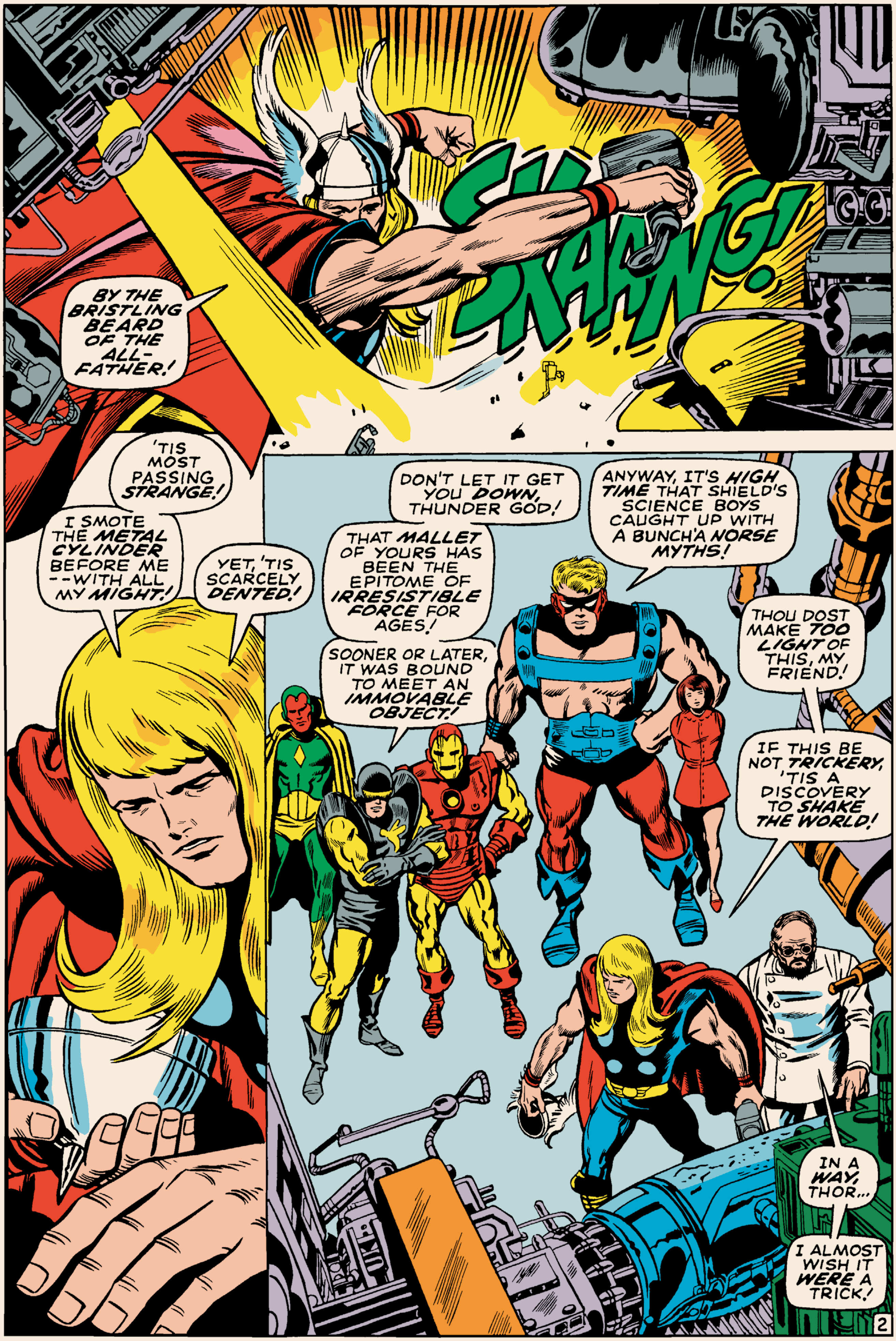
STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

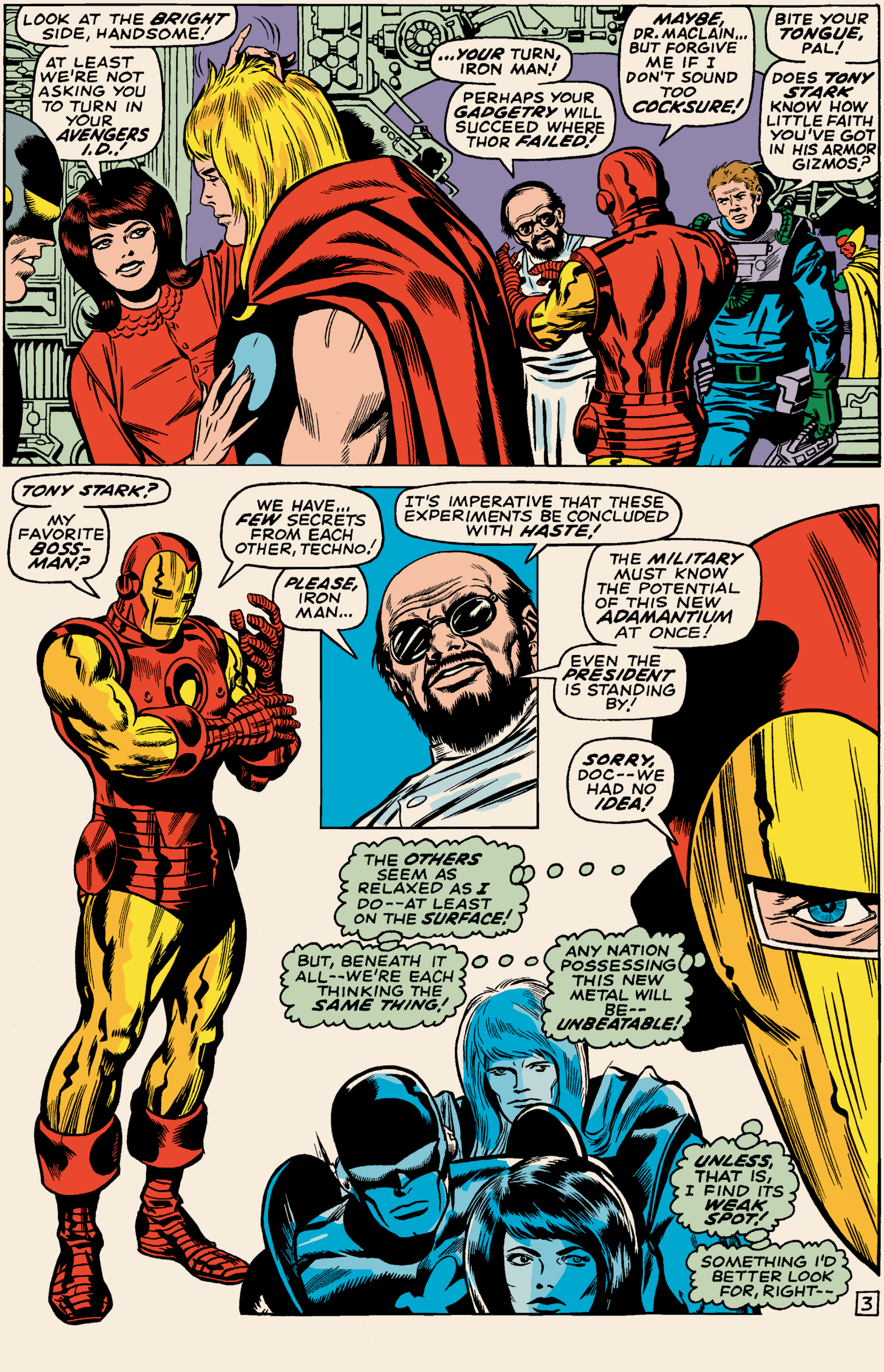
Question: Is there such a thing as too much success? Answer: There sure is! Example: The most recent issues of CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON. It all started because we try to make our letters pages meaningful and intellectually stimulating. We've always attempted to avoid the usual "Your mag's groovy. Keep up the good work" or "Your mag stinks. Get lost" kind of thing. But (and here's where the too-much-success bit comes in), almost every letter to Cap and the Falcon now deals with social issues, civil rights, patriotism, Viet Nam, and student unrest. We suddenly realized that nobody's saying anything about the stories themselves! So, our problem boils down to this — should we change our format to 20 pages of letters with a two-page story? Or, perhaps just change the title to TIME/WEEK? It's funny — we always wanted Cap (and all our characters) to be human, to be relevant. Even though the plots may be fantasy-filled and seemingly outrageous, we wanted you to relate to the real-life problems that crop up — problems which may even parallel your own. Well, you've been relating, all right! You've gotten so involved that all your mail seems to concern the world at large, and the conflicts and divisions that are assaulting our society. We're proud of your concern — thrilled by your insight, and your enthusiasm — but we're worried about our stories! Is anybody reading them? Hasn't anyone noticed how great Gene's pencilling looks with Bill Everett's inking? Won't anyone mention that Cap's adventures are more action-packed and wondrous than ever? We wish you'd even find a mistake or two, just to let us know you're there! Come on, talk about the stories again, just for a while, huh? Otherwise they may replace us — with Walter Cronkite!

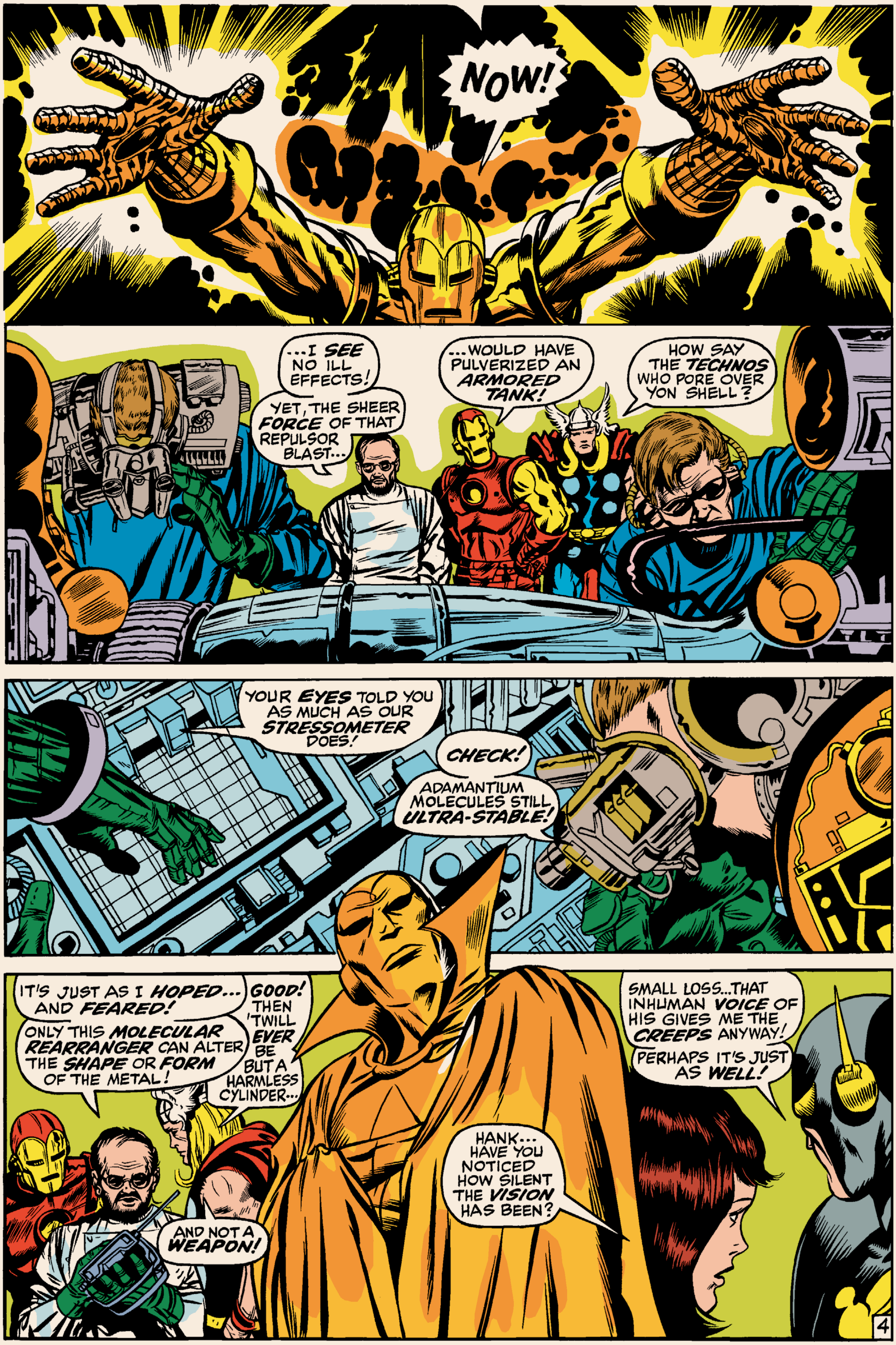
Onward!

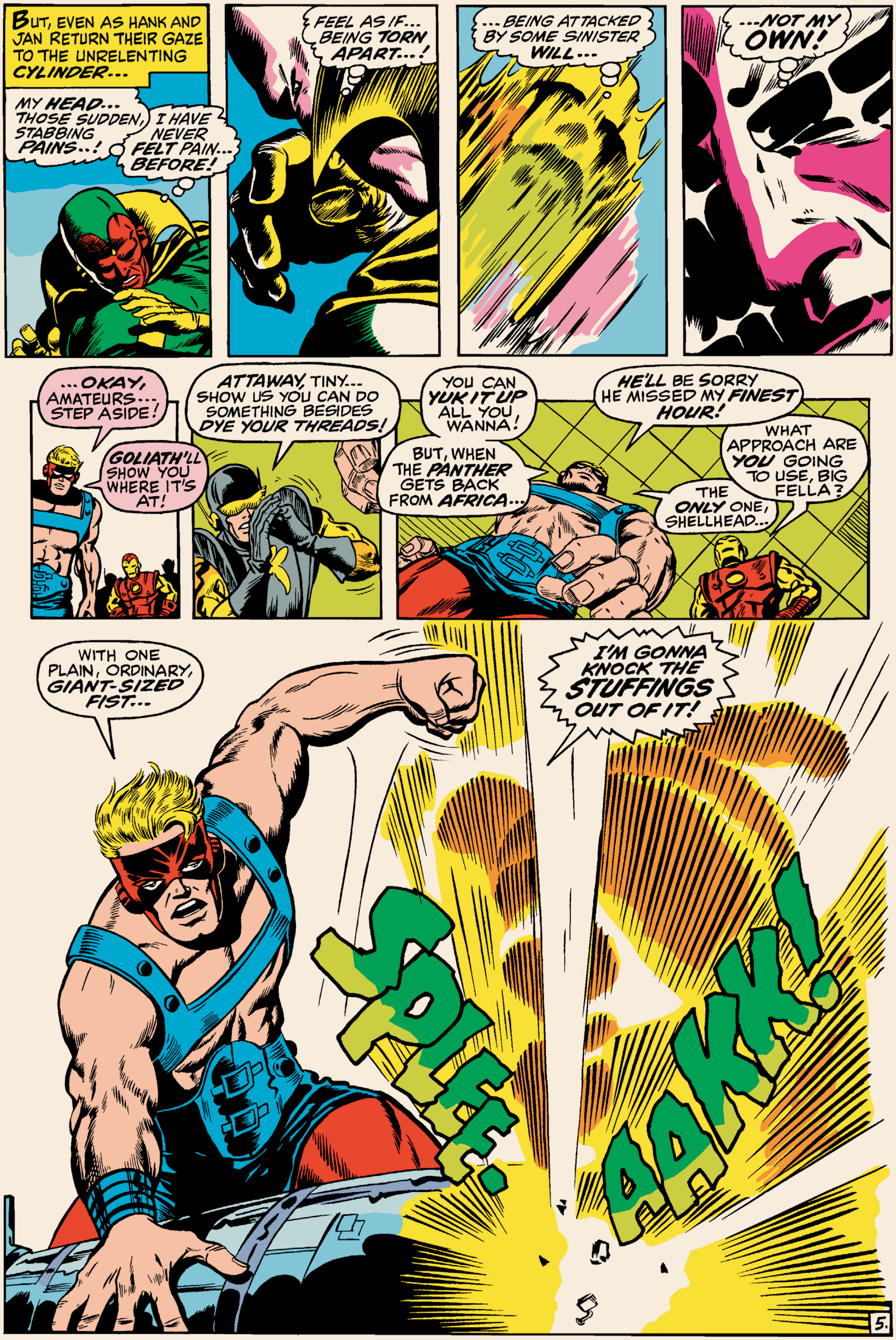
Stan

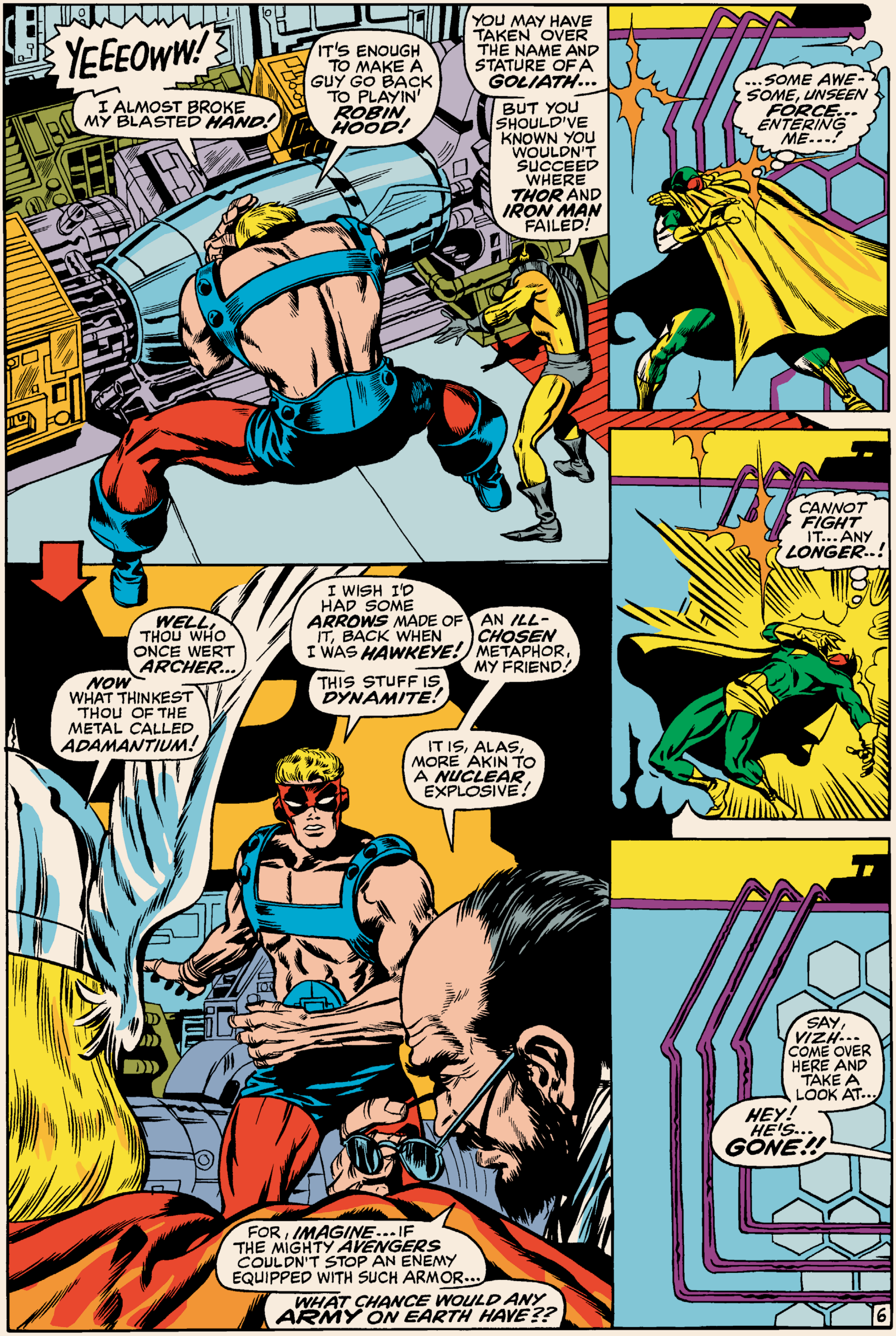

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!™
BETRAYAL!
SACRED MJOLNIR-- HAMMER OF HOLOCAUST AND HAVOC--
STRIKE NOW-- FOR THE SON OF ODIN!!
A NEW TRIUMPH-TOSSING TRIO!
STAN LEE EDITOR
ROY THOMAS WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
INKED BY......SYD SHORES
LETTERED BY...ARTIE SIMEK

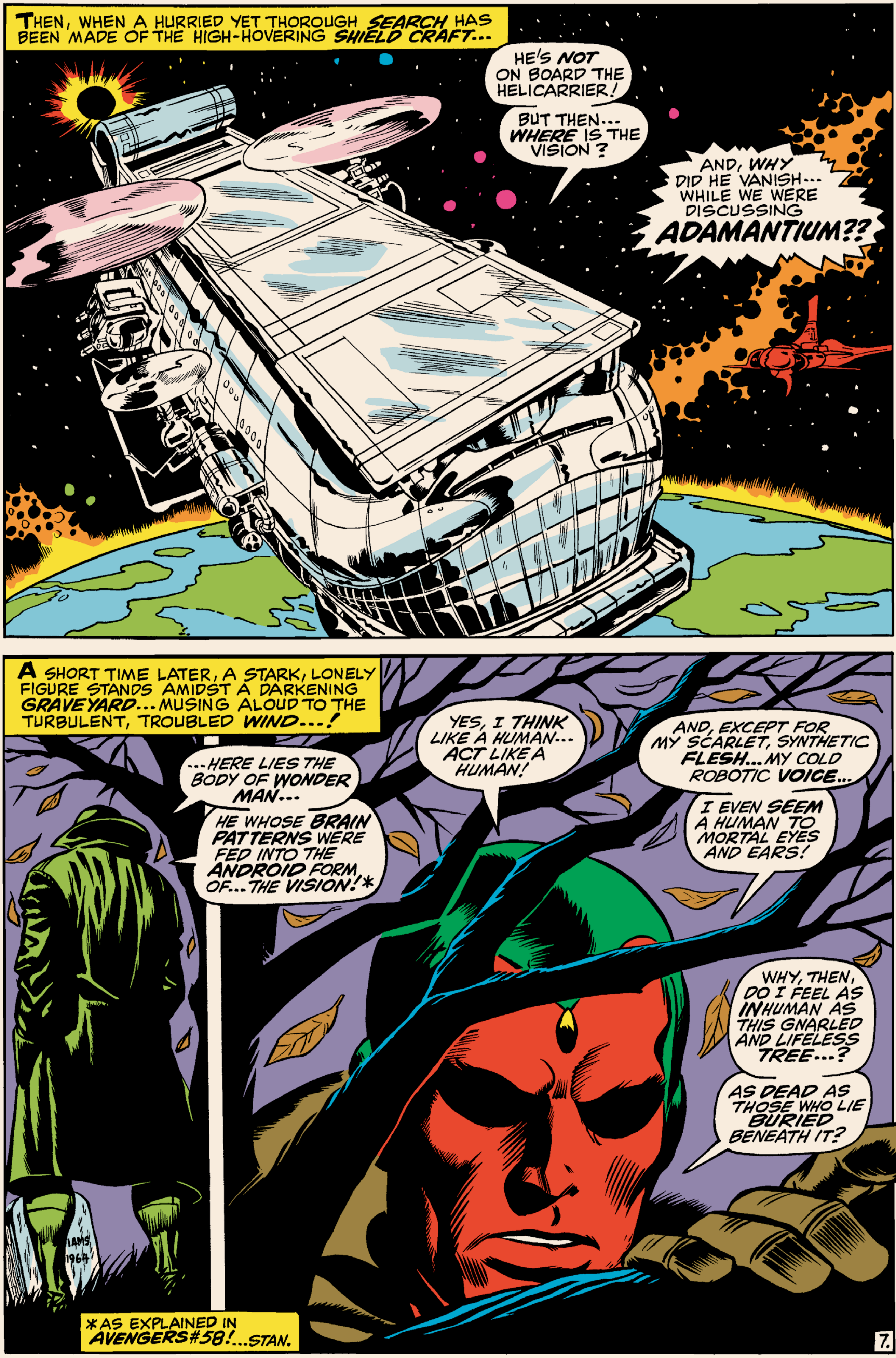

SKRAANG!
BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF THE ALL-FATHER!
'TIS MOST PASSING STRANGE!
I SMOTE THE METAL CYLINDER BEFORE ME --WITH ALL MY MIGHT!
YET, 'TIS SCARCELY DENTED!
DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN, THUNDER GOD!
THAT MALLET OF YOURS HAS BEEN THE EPITOME OF IRRESISTIBLE FORCE FOR AGES!
SOONER OR LATER, IT WAS BOUND TO MEET AN IMMOVABLE OBJECT!
ANYWAY, IT'S HIGH TIME THAT SHIELD'S SCIENCE BOYS CAUGHT UP WITH A BUNCH'A NORSE MYTHS!
THOU DOST MAKE TOO LIGHT OF THIS, MY FRIEND!
IF THIS BE NOT TRICKERY, 'TIS A DISCOVERY TO SHAKE THE WORLD!
IN A WAY, THOR...
I ALMOST WISH IT WERE A TRICK!
2

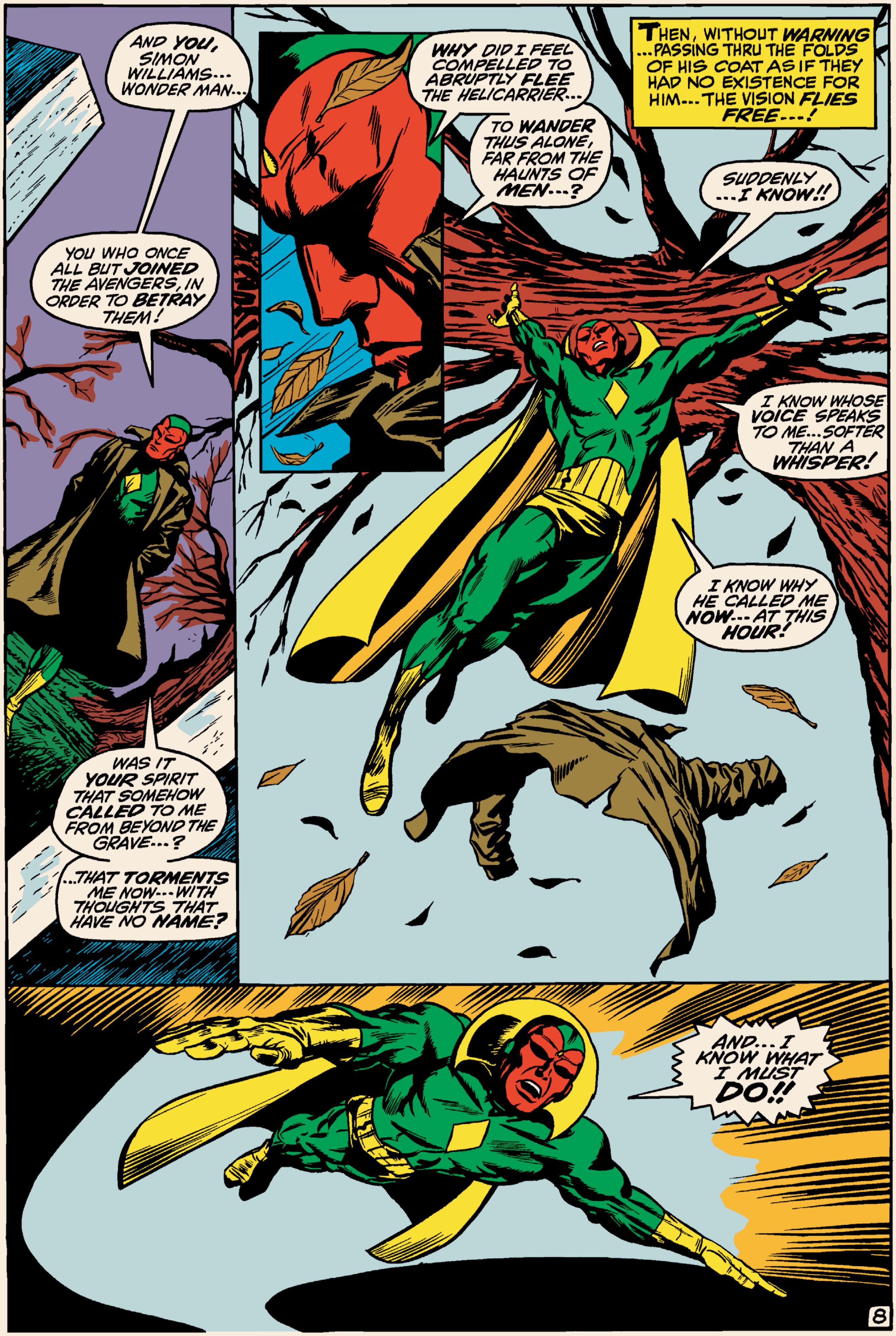

LOOK AT THE *BRIGHT* SIDE, HANDSOME!
AT LEAST WE'RE NOT ASKING YOU TO TURN IN YOUR *AVENGERS I.D.!*
...YOUR TURN, IRON MAN!
PERHAPS YOUR *GADGETRY* WILL SUCCEED WHERE THOR *FAILED!*
MAYBE, DR. MACLAIN... BUT FORGIVE ME IF I DON'T SOUND TOO *COCKSURE!*
BITE YOUR *TONGUE,* PAL!
DOES *TONY STARK* KNOW HOW LITTLE FAITH YOU'VE GOT IN HIS ARMOR GIZMOS?
TONY STARK?
MY FAVORITE *BOSS-MAN?*
WE HAVE... *FEW* SECRETS FROM EACH OTHER, TECHNO!
PLEASE, IRON MAN...
IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT THESE EXPERIMENTS BE CONCLUDED WITH *HASTE!*
THE *MILITARY* MUST KNOW THE POTENTIAL OF THIS NEW *ADAMANTIUM* AT ONCE!
EVEN THE *PRESIDENT* IS STANDING BY!
SORRY, DOC--WE HAD NO *IDEA!*
THE *OTHERS* SEEM AS RELAXED AS *I* DO--AT LEAST ON THE *SURFACE!*
BUT, BENEATH IT ALL--WE'RE EACH THINKING THE *SAME THING!*
ANY NATION POSSESSING THIS NEW METAL WILL BE--*UNBEATABLE!*
UNLESS, THAT IS, I FIND ITS *WEAK SPOT!*
SOMETHING I'D BETTER LOOK FOR, RIGHT--
3

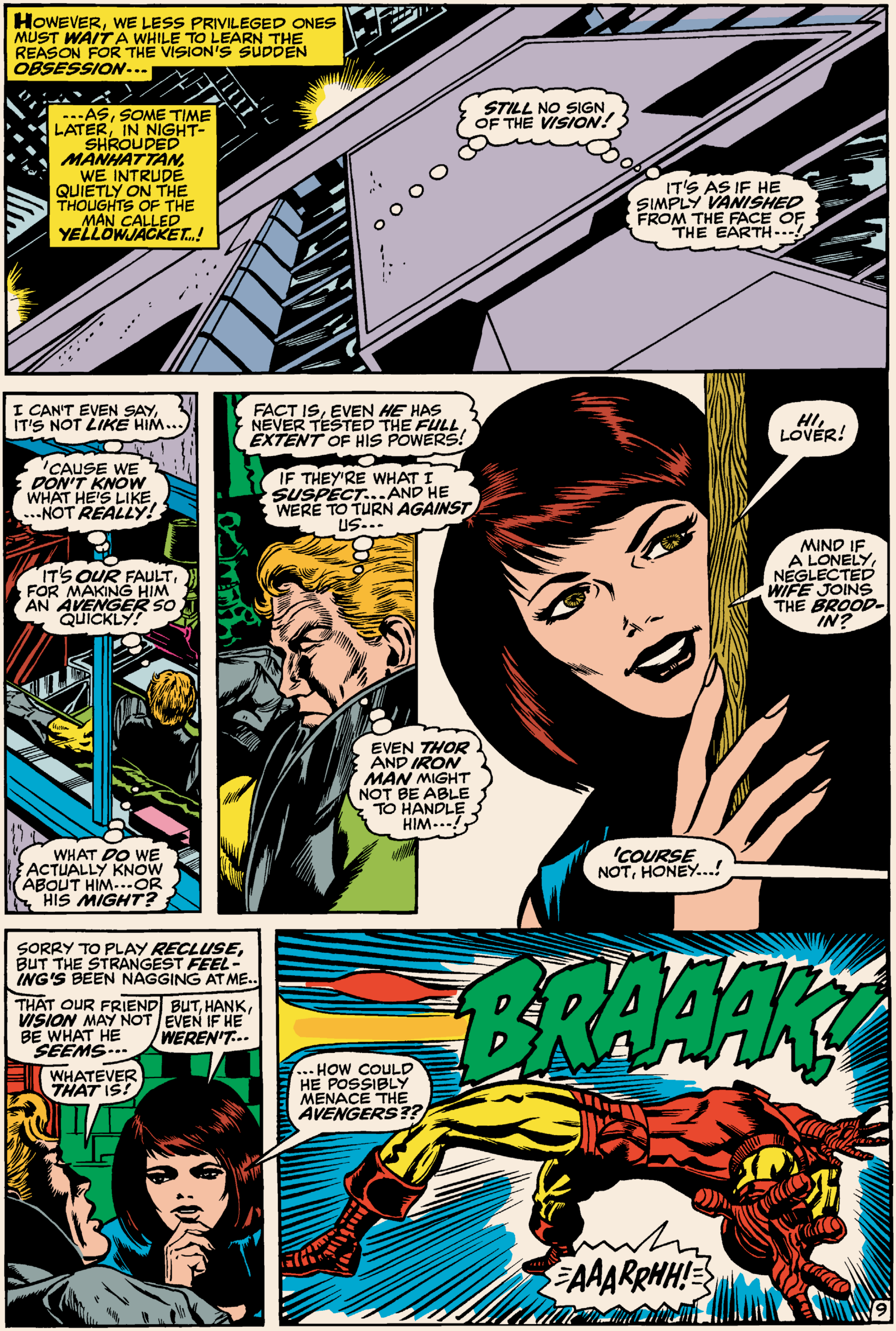

NOW!
...I SEE NO ILL EFFECTS!
YET, THE SHEER FORCE OF THAT REPULSOR BLAST...
...WOULD HAVE PULVERIZED AN ARMORED TANK!
HOW SAY THE TECHNOS WHO PORE OVER YON SHELL?
YOUR EYES TOLD YOU AS MUCH AS OUR STRESSOMETER DOES!
CHECK!
ADAMANTIUM MOLECULES STILL ULTRA-STABLE!
IT'S JUST AS I HOPED... AND FEARED!
ONLY THIS MOLECULAR REARRANGER CAN ALTER THE SHAPE OR FORM OF THE METAL!
AND NOT A WEAPON!
GOOD! THEN 'TWILL EVER BE BUT A HARMLESS CYLINDER...
SMALL LOSS...THAT INHUMAN VOICE OF HIS GIVES ME THE CREEPS ANYWAY!
PERHAPS IT'S JUST AS WELL!
HANK... HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW SILENT THE VISION HAS BEEN?
4

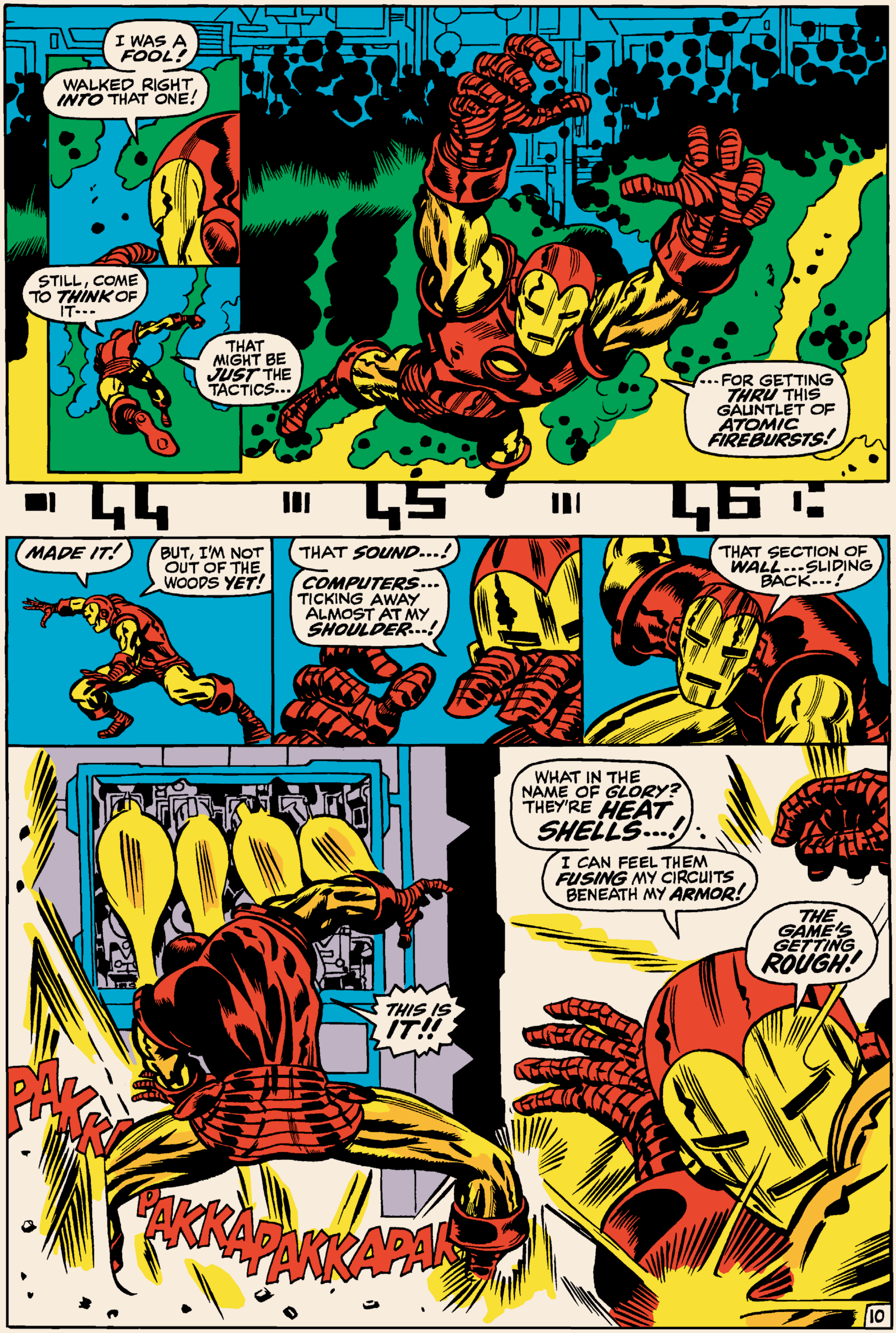

BUT, EVEN AS HANK AND JAN RETURN THEIR GAZE TO THE UNRELENTING CYLINDER...
MY HEAD... THOSE SUDDEN, STABBING PAINS..!
I HAVE NEVER FELT PAIN... BEFORE!
FEEL AS IF... BEING TORN APART...!
...BEING ATTACKED BY SOME SINISTER WILL...
...NOT MY OWN!
...OKAY, AMATEURS... STEP ASIDE!
GOLIATH'LL SHOW YOU WHERE IT'S AT!
ATTAWAY, TINY... SHOW US YOU CAN DO SOMETHING BESIDES DYE YOUR THREADS!
YOU CAN YUK IT UP ALL YOU WANNA!
BUT, WHEN THE PANTHER GETS BACK FROM AFRICA...
HE'LL BE SORRY HE MISSED MY FINEST HOUR!
WHAT APPROACH ARE YOU GOING TO USE, BIG FELLA?
THE ONLY ONE, SHELLHEAD...
WITH ONE PLAIN, ORDINARY, GIANT-SIZED FIST...
I'M GONNA KNOCK THE STUFFINGS OUT OF IT!
SPLFF!
AAKK!
5.

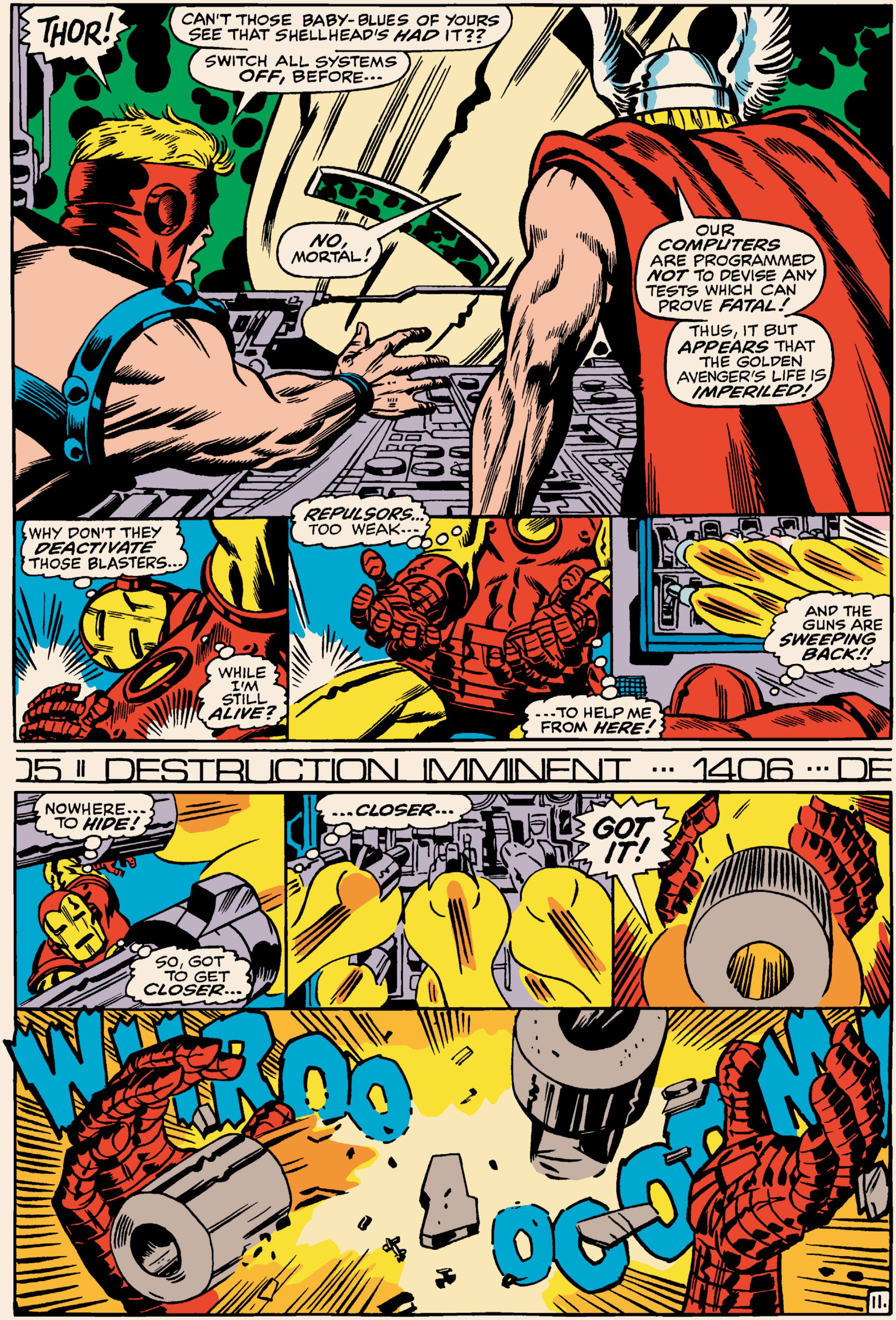

YEEEOWW!
I ALMOST BROKE MY BLASTED HAND!
IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE A GUY GO BACK TO PLAYIN' ROBIN HOOD!
YOU MAY HAVE TAKEN OVER THE NAME AND STATURE OF A GOLIATH...
BUT YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU WOULDN'T SUCCEED WHERE THOR AND IRON MAN FAILED!
...SOME AWE-SOME, UNSEEN FORCE... ENTERING ME...!
CANNOT FIGHT IT... ANY LONGER..!
WELL, THOU WHO ONCE WERT ARCHER...
NOW WHAT THINKEST THOU OF THE METAL CALLED ADAMANTIUM!
I WISH I'D HAD SOME ARROWS MADE OF IT, BACK WHEN I WAS HAWKEYE!
THIS STUFF IS DYNAMITE!
AN ILL-CHOSEN METAPHOR, MY FRIEND!
IT IS, ALAS, MORE AKIN TO A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE!
FOR, IMAGINE... IF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS COULDN'T STOP AN ENEMY EQUIPPED WITH SUCH ARMOR...
WHAT CHANCE WOULD ANY ARMY ON EARTH HAVE??
SAY, VIZH... COME OVER HERE AND TAKE A LOOK AT...
HEY! HE'S... GONE!!
6

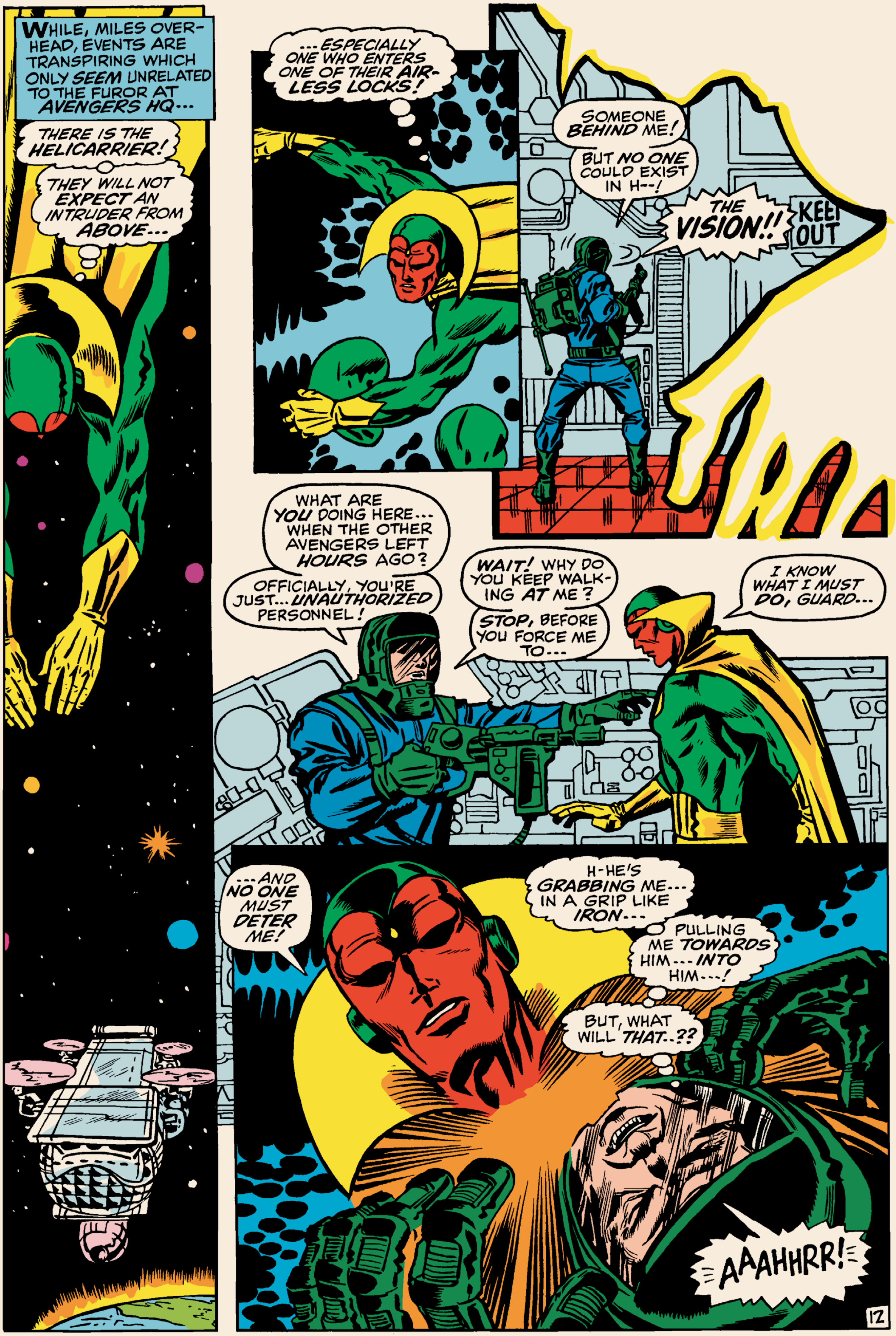

THEN, WHEN A HURRIED YET THOROUGH SEARCH HAS BEEN MADE OF THE HIGH-HOVERING SHIELD CRAFT...
HE'S NOT ON BOARD THE HELICARRIER!
BUT THEN--- WHERE IS THE VISION?
AND, WHY DID HE VANISH--- WHILE WE WERE DISCUSSING ADAMANTIUM??
A SHORT TIME LATER, A STARK, LONELY FIGURE STANDS AMIDST A DARKENING GRAVEYARD... MUSING ALOUD TO THE TURBULENT, TROUBLED WIND...!
...HERE LIES THE BODY OF WONDER MAN---
HE WHOSE BRAIN PATTERNS WERE FED INTO THE ANDROID FORM, OF... THE VISION!*
YES, I THINK LIKE A HUMAN--- ACT LIKE A HUMAN!
AND, EXCEPT FOR MY SCARLET, SYNTHETIC FLESH... MY COLD ROBOTIC VOICE...
I EVEN SEEM A HUMAN TO MORTAL EYES AND EARS!
WHY, THEN, DO I FEEL AS INHUMAN AS THIS GNARLED AND LIFELESS TREE...?
AS DEAD AS THOSE WHO LIE BURIED BENEATH IT?
IAMS 1964
*AS EXPLAINED IN AVENGERS #58!...STAN.
7.

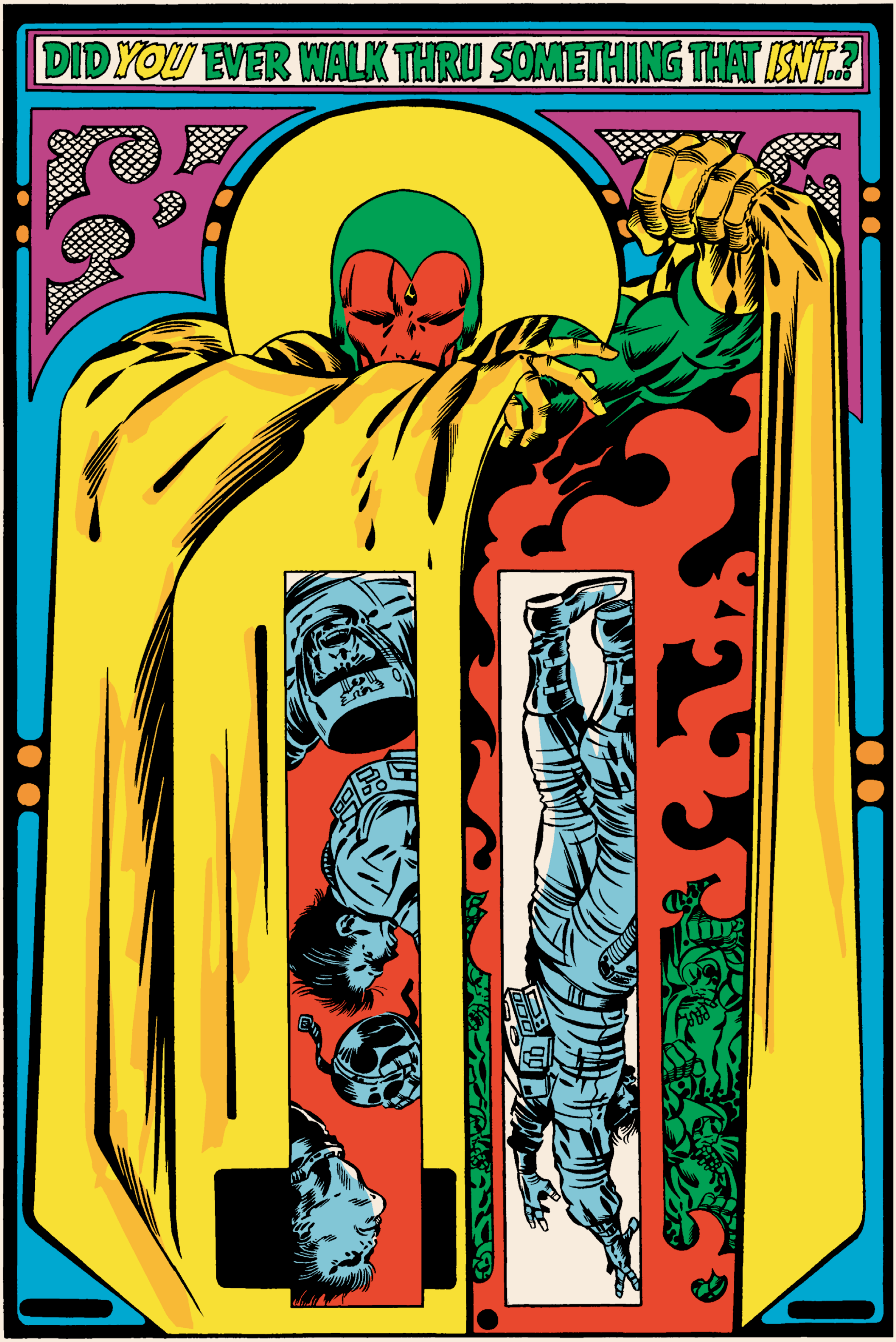

AND YOU, SIMON WILLIAMS... WONDER MAN...
YOU WHO ONCE ALL BUT JOINED THE AVENGERS, IN ORDER TO BETRAY THEM!
WAS IT YOUR SPIRIT THAT SOMEHOW CALLED TO ME FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE...?
...THAT TORMENTS ME NOW...WITH THOUGHTS THAT HAVE NO NAME?
WHY DID I FEEL COMPELLED TO ABRUPTLY FLEE THE HELICARRIER...
TO WANDER THUS ALONE, FAR FROM THE HAUNTS OF MEN...?
THEN, WITHOUT WARNING ...PASSING THRU THE FOLDS OF HIS COAT AS IF THEY HAD NO EXISTENCE FOR HIM... THE VISION FLIES FREE...!
SUDDENLY ...I KNOW!!
I KNOW WHOSE VOICE SPEAKS TO ME...SOFTER THAN A WHISPER!
I KNOW WHY HE CALLED ME NOW... AT THIS HOUR!
AND... I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO!!
8

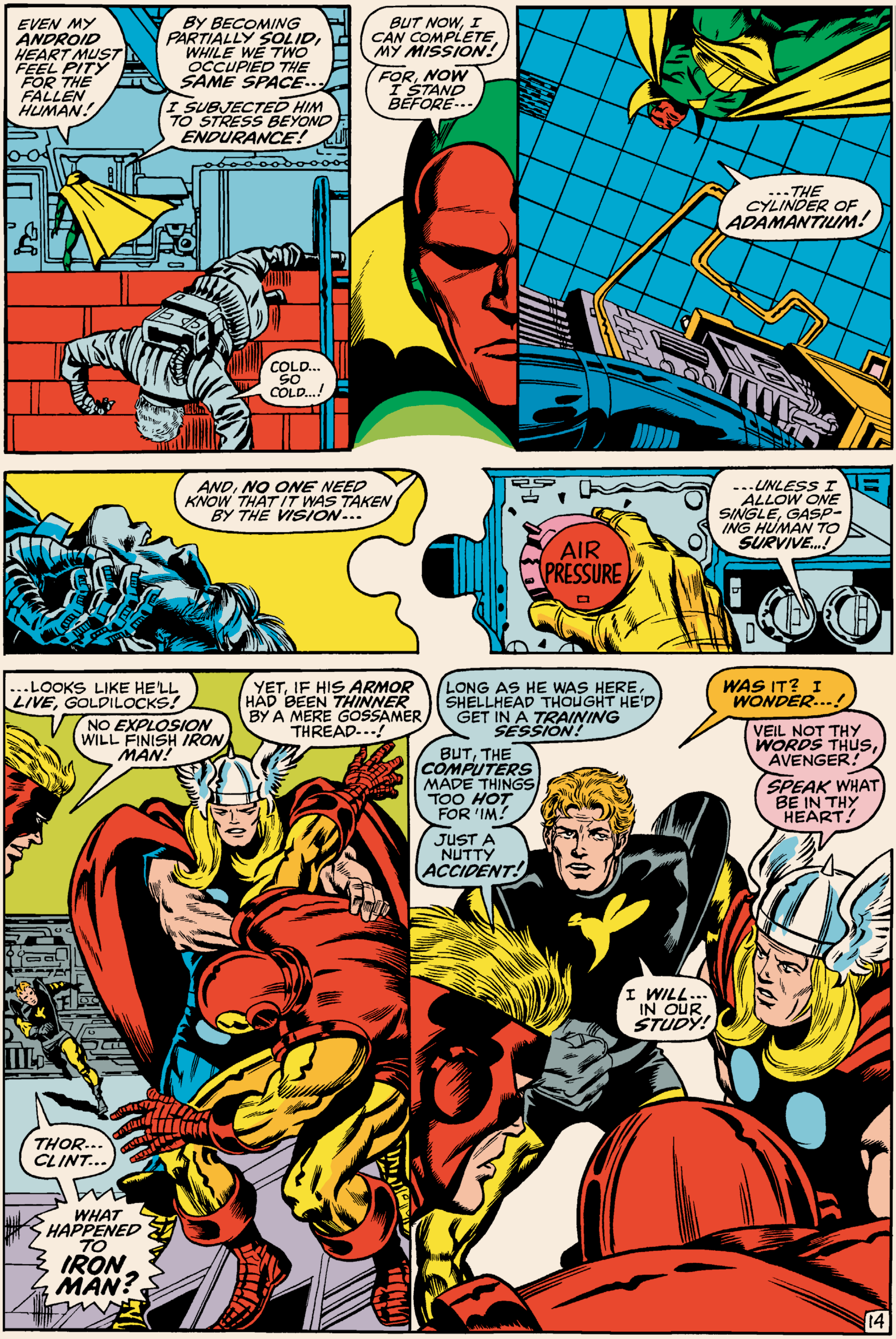

HOWEVER, WE LESS PRIVILEGED ONES MUST WAIT A WHILE TO LEARN THE REASON FOR THE VISION'S SUDDEN OBSESSION...
...AS, SOME TIME LATER, IN NIGHT-SHROUDED MANHATTAN, WE INTRUDE QUIETLY ON THE THOUGHTS OF THE MAN CALLED YELLOWJACKET...!
STILL NO SIGN OF THE VISION!
IT'S AS IF HE SIMPLY VANISHED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH...!
I CAN'T EVEN SAY, IT'S NOT LIKE HIM...
'CAUSE WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S LIKE ...NOT REALLY!
IT'S OUR FAULT, FOR MAKING HIM AN AVENGER SO QUICKLY!
WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY KNOW ABOUT HIM...OR HIS MIGHT?
FACT IS, EVEN HE HAS NEVER TESTED THE FULL EXTENT OF HIS POWERS!
IF THEY'RE WHAT I SUSPECT...AND HE WERE TO TURN AGAINST US...
EVEN THOR AND IRON MAN MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO HANDLE HIM...!
HI, LOVER!
MIND IF A LONELY, NEGLECTED WIFE JOINS THE BROOD-IN?
'COURSE NOT, HONEY...!
SORRY TO PLAY RECLUSE, BUT THE STRANGEST FEELING'S BEEN NAGGING AT ME..
THAT OUR FRIEND VISION MAY NOT BE WHAT HE SEEMS...
BUT, HANK, EVEN IF HE WEREN'T...
WHATEVER THAT IS!
...HOW COULD HE POSSIBLY MENACE THE AVENGERS??
BRAAAK!
AAARRHH!
9

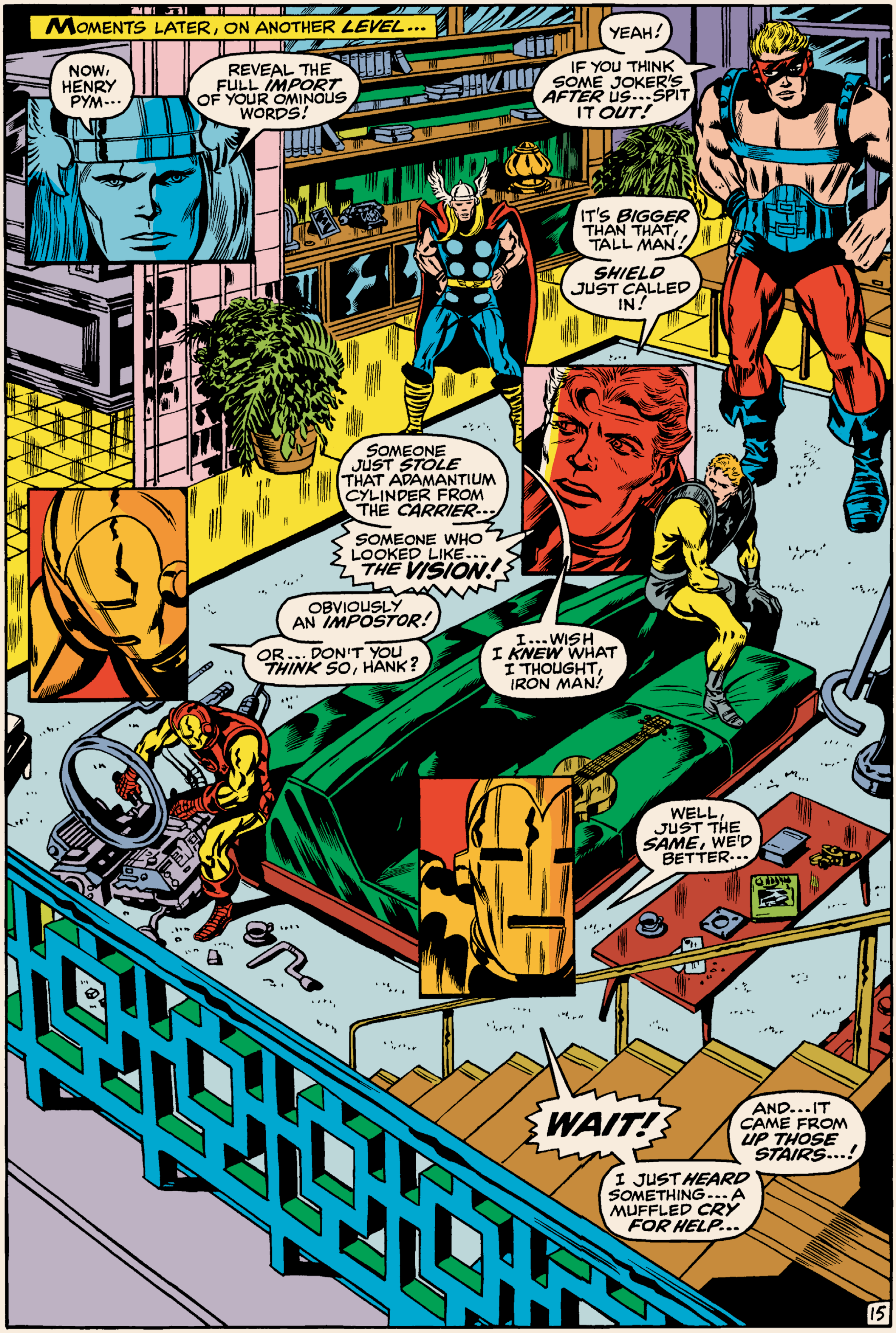

I WAS A *FOOL!*
WALKED RIGHT *INTO* THAT ONE!
STILL, COME TO *THINK* OF IT---
THAT MIGHT BE *JUST* THE TACTICS---
---FOR GETTING *THRU* THIS GAUNTLET OF *ATOMIC FIREBURSTS!*
44
45
46
MADE IT!
BUT, I'M NOT OUT OF THE WOODS *YET!*
THAT *SOUND---!*
COMPUTERS--- TICKING AWAY ALMOST AT MY *SHOULDER---!*
THAT SECTION OF *WALL*---SLIDING BACK---!
WHAT IN THE NAME OF *GLORY?* THEY'RE *HEAT SHELLS---!*
I CAN FEEL THEM *FUSING* MY CIRCUITS BENEATH MY *ARMOR!*
THE GAME'S GETTING ROUGH!
THIS IS IT!!
PAKK!
PAKKAPAKKAPAK
10

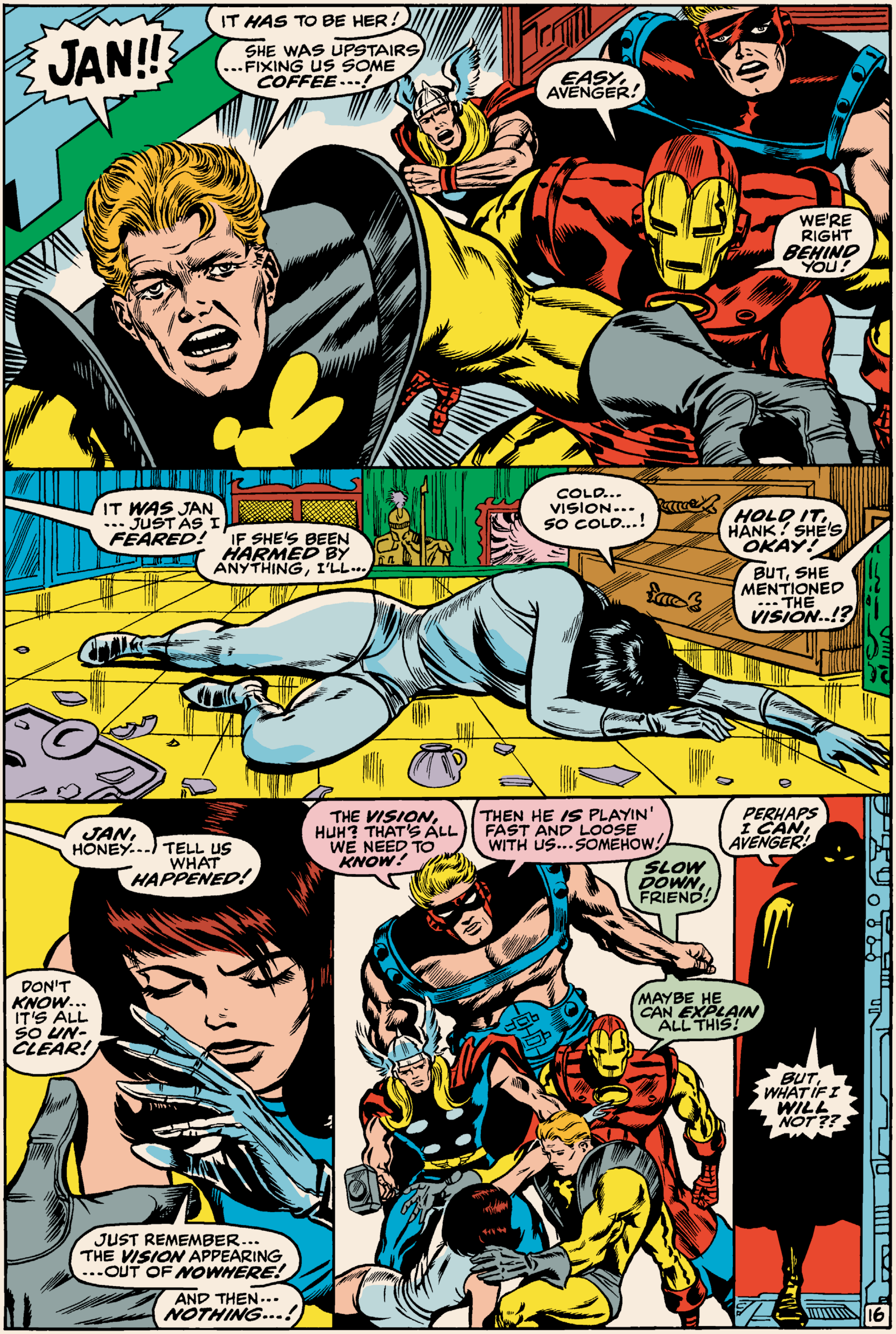

THOR!
CAN'T THOSE BABY-BLUES OF YOURS SEE THAT SHELLHEAD'S *HAD* IT??
SWITCH ALL SYSTEMS *OFF*, BEFORE---
NO, MORTAL!
OUR *COMPUTERS* ARE PROGRAMMED *NOT* TO DEVISE ANY TESTS WHICH CAN PROVE *FATAL!*
THUS, IT BUT *APPEARS* THAT THE GOLDEN AVENGER'S LIFE IS *IMPERILED!*
WHY DON'T THEY *DEACTIVATE* THOSE BLASTERS...
WHILE I'M STILL *ALIVE?*
REPULSORS... TOO WEAK...
...TO HELP ME FROM *HERE!*
AND THE GUNS ARE *SWEEPING BACK!!*
)5 II DESTRUCTION IMMINENT ··· 1406 ··· DE
NOWHERE... TO *HIDE!*
SO, GOT TO GET *CLOSER...*
...*CLOSER*...
GOT IT!
WHROOOOOM!
11.

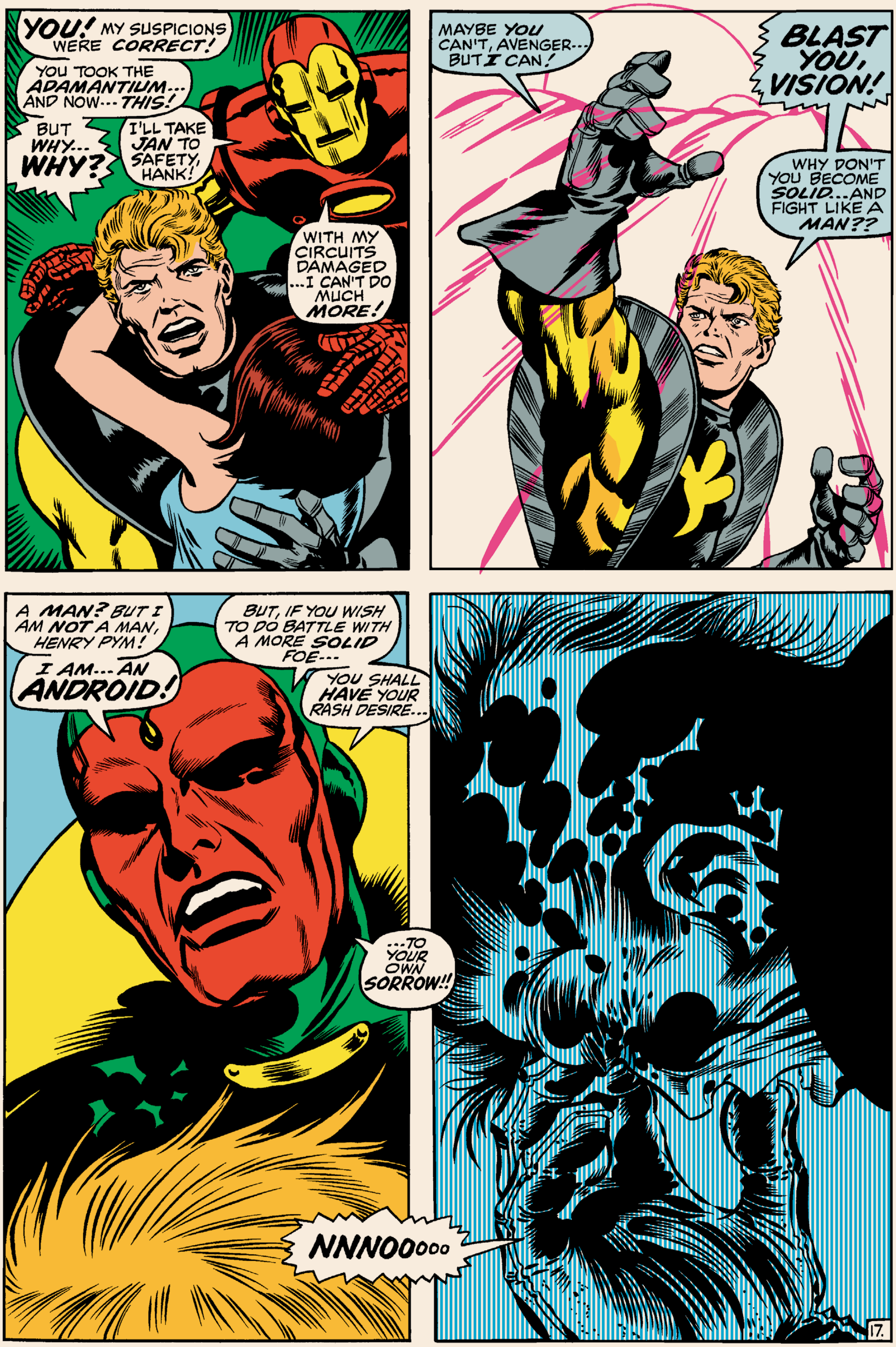

WHILE, MILES OVERHEAD, EVENTS ARE TRANSPIRING WHICH ONLY SEEM UNRELATED TO THE FUROR AT AVENGERS HQ...
THERE IS THE HELICARRIER!
THEY WILL NOT EXPECT AN INTRUDER FROM ABOVE...
...ESPECIALLY ONE WHO ENTERS ONE OF THEIR AIRLESS LOCKS!
SOMEONE BEHIND ME!
BUT NO ONE COULD EXIST IN H--!
THE VISION!!
KEEP OUT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE... WHEN THE OTHER AVENGERS LEFT HOURS AGO?
OFFICIALLY, YOU'RE JUST... UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL!
WAIT! WHY DO YOU KEEP WALKING AT ME?
STOP, BEFORE YOU FORCE ME TO...
I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO, GUARD...
...AND NO ONE MUST DETER ME!
H-HE'S GRABBING ME... IN A GRIP LIKE IRON...
PULLING ME TOWARDS HIM... INTO HIM...!
BUT, WHAT WILL THAT..??
AAAHHRR!
12

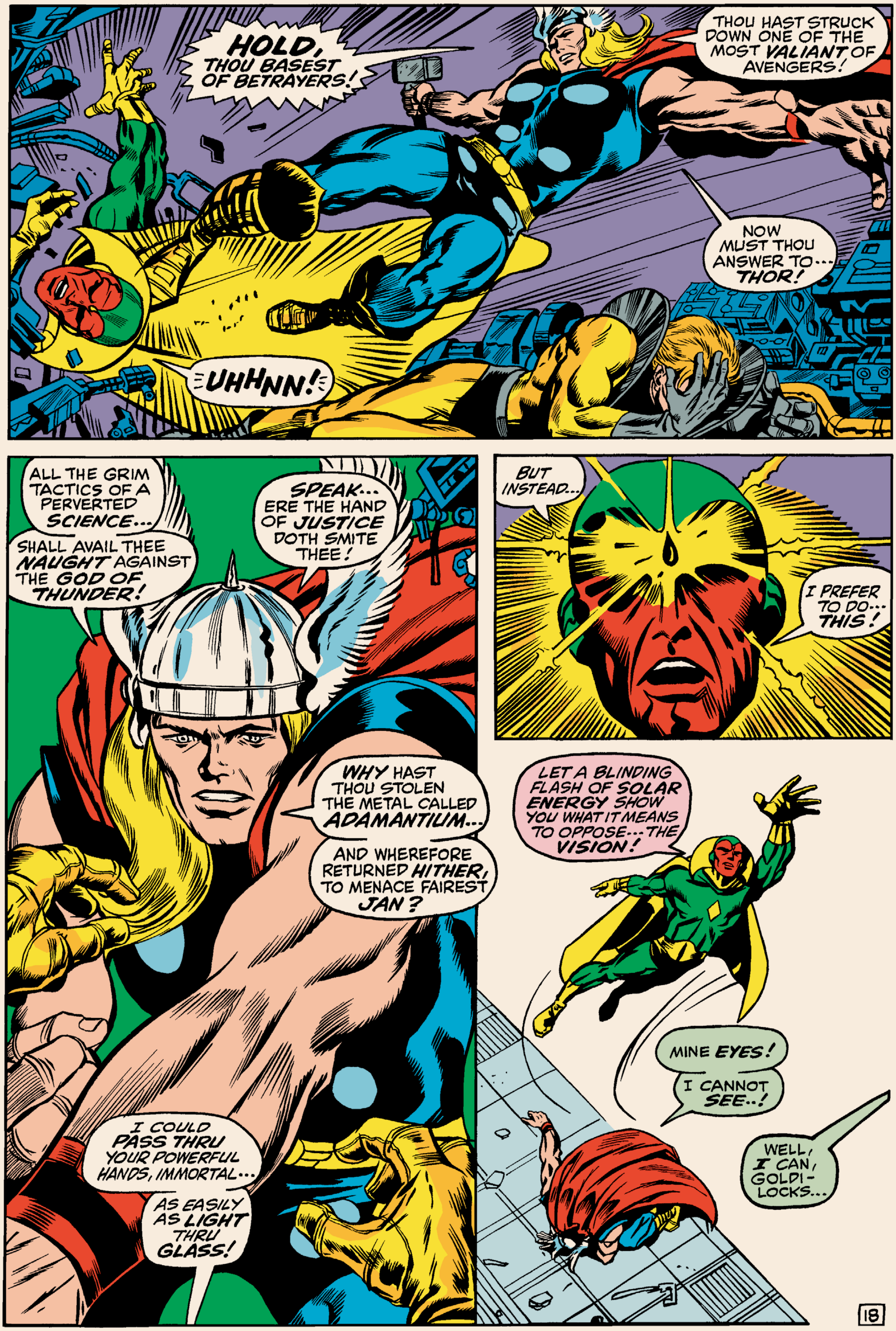

DID YOU EVER WALK THRU SOMETHING THAT ISN'T..?

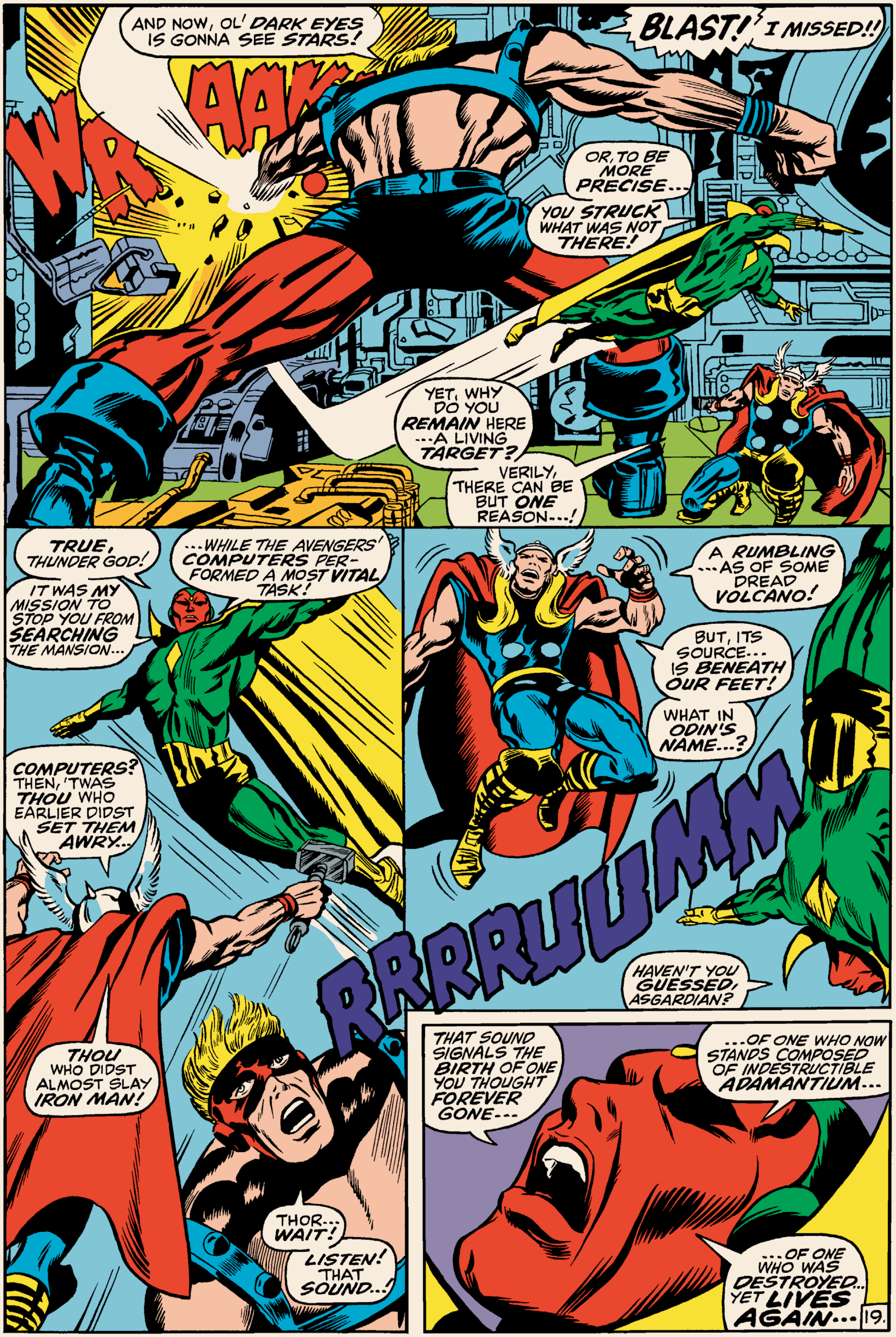

EVEN MY ANDROID HEART MUST FEEL PITY FOR THE FALLEN HUMAN!
BY BECOMING PARTIALLY SOLID, WHILE WE TWO OCCUPIED THE SAME SPACE...
I SUBJECTED HIM TO STRESS BEYOND ENDURANCE!
COLD... SO COLD...!
BUT NOW, I CAN COMPLETE MY MISSION!
FOR, NOW I STAND BEFORE---
---THE CYLINDER OF ADAMANTIUM!
AND, NO ONE NEED KNOW THAT IT WAS TAKEN BY THE VISION---
---UNLESS I ALLOW ONE SINGLE, GASPING HUMAN TO SURVIVE...!
AIR PRESSURE
...LOOKS LIKE HE'LL LIVE, GOLDILOCKS!
NO EXPLOSION WILL FINISH IRON MAN!
YET, IF HIS ARMOR HAD BEEN THINNER BY A MERE GOSSAMER THREAD---!
THOR--- CLINT---
WHAT HAPPENED TO IRON MAN?
LONG AS HE WAS HERE, SHELLHEAD THOUGHT HE'D GET IN A TRAINING SESSION!
BUT, THE COMPUTERS MADE THINGS TOO HOT FOR 'IM!
JUST A NUTTY ACCIDENT!
WAS IT? I WONDER---!
VEIL NOT THY WORDS THUS, AVENGER!
SPEAK WHAT BE IN THY HEART!
I WILL... IN OUR STUDY!
14

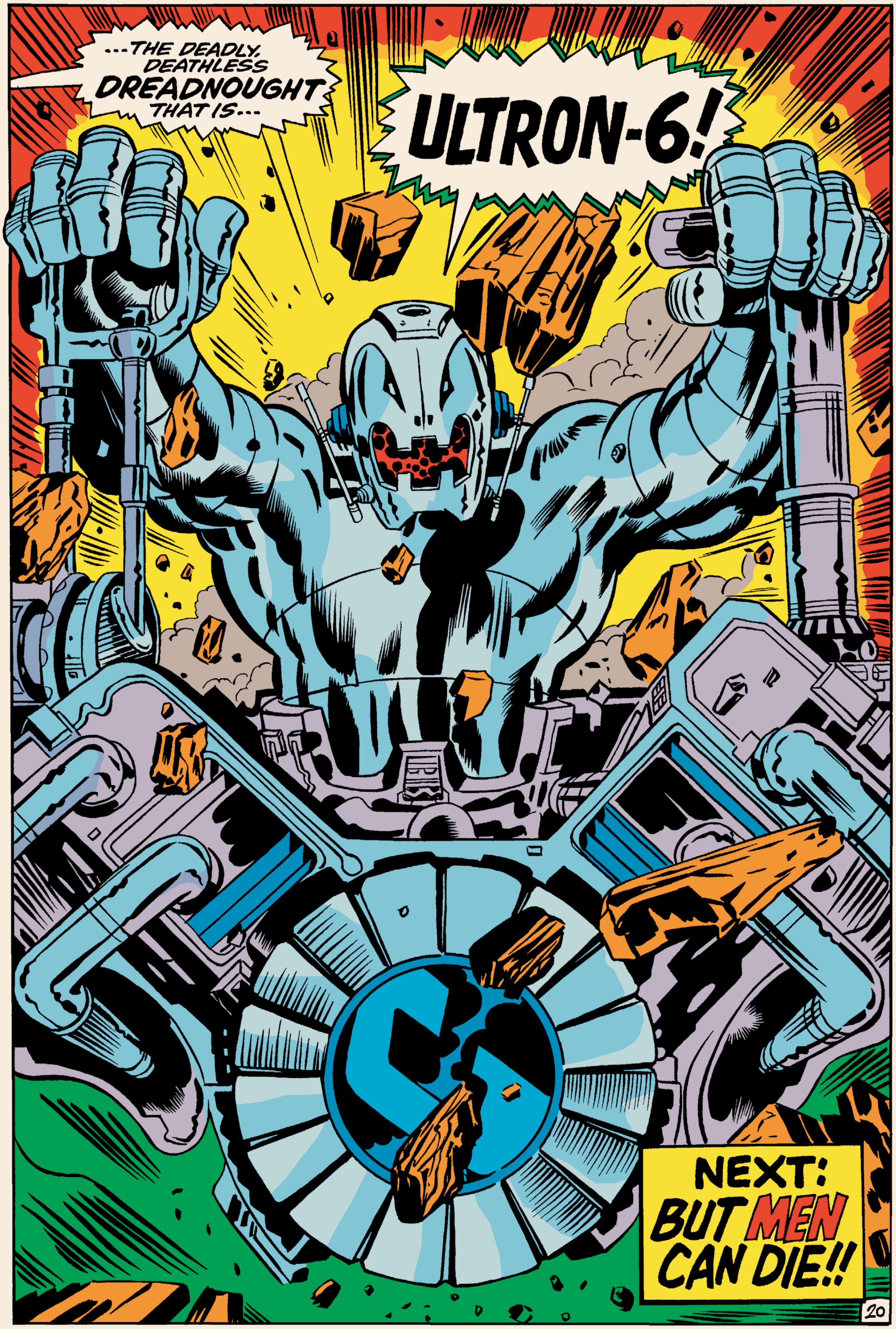

MOMENTS LATER, ON ANOTHER LEVEL...
NOW, HENRY PYM...
REVEAL THE FULL IMPORT OF YOUR OMINOUS WORDS!
YEAH!
IF YOU THINK SOME JOKER'S AFTER US...SPIT IT OUT!
IT'S BIGGER THAN THAT, TALL MAN!
SHIELD JUST CALLED IN!
SOMEONE JUST STOLE THAT ADAMANTIUM CYLINDER FROM THE CARRIER...
SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE... THE VISION!
OBVIOUSLY AN IMPOSTOR!
OR... DON'T YOU THINK SO, HANK?
I...WISH I KNEW WHAT I THOUGHT, IRON MAN!
WELL, JUST THE SAME, WE'D BETTER...
WAIT!
I JUST HEARD SOMETHING... A MUFFLED CRY FOR HELP...
AND...IT CAME FROM UP THOSE STAIRS...!
15

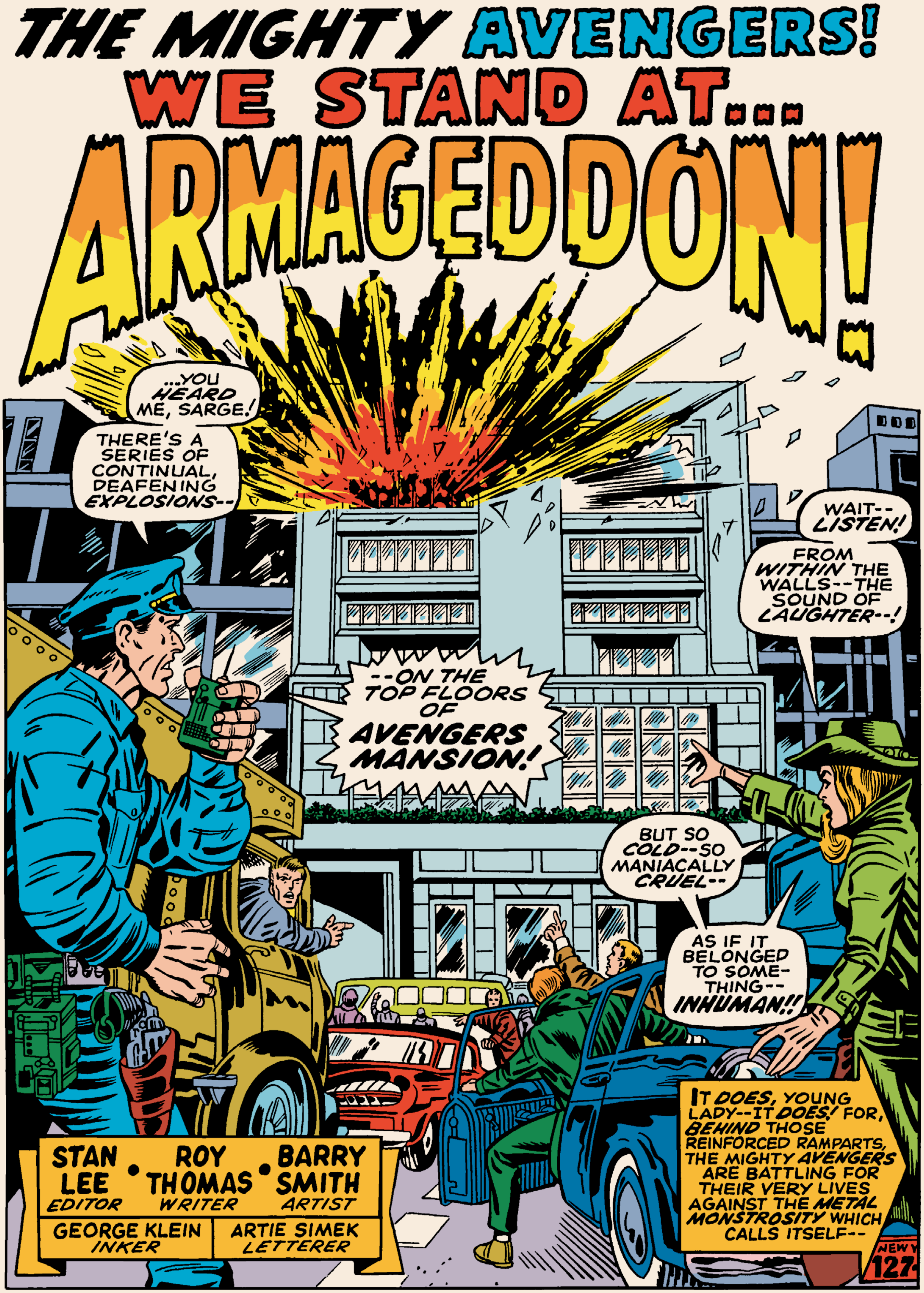

JAN!!
IT HAS TO BE HER!
SHE WAS UPSTAIRS ...FIXING US SOME COFFEE...!
EASY, AVENGER!
WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
IT WAS JAN ... JUST AS I FEARED!
IF SHE'S BEEN HARMED BY ANYTHING, I'LL...
COLD... VISION... SO COLD...!
HOLD IT, HANK! SHE'S OKAY!
BUT, SHE MENTIONED ... THE VISION..!?
JAN, HONEY...
TELL US WHAT HAPPENED!
DON'T KNOW... IT'S ALL SO UNCLEAR!
JUST REMEMBER... THE VISION APPEARING ...OUT OF NOWHERE!
AND THEN... NOTHING...!
THE VISION, HUH? THAT'S ALL WE NEED TO KNOW!
THEN HE IS PLAYIN' FAST AND LOOSE WITH US...SOMEHOW!
SLOW DOWN, FRIEND!
MAYBE HE CAN EXPLAIN ALL THIS!
PERHAPS I CAN, AVENGER!
BUT, WHAT IF I WILL NOT??
16

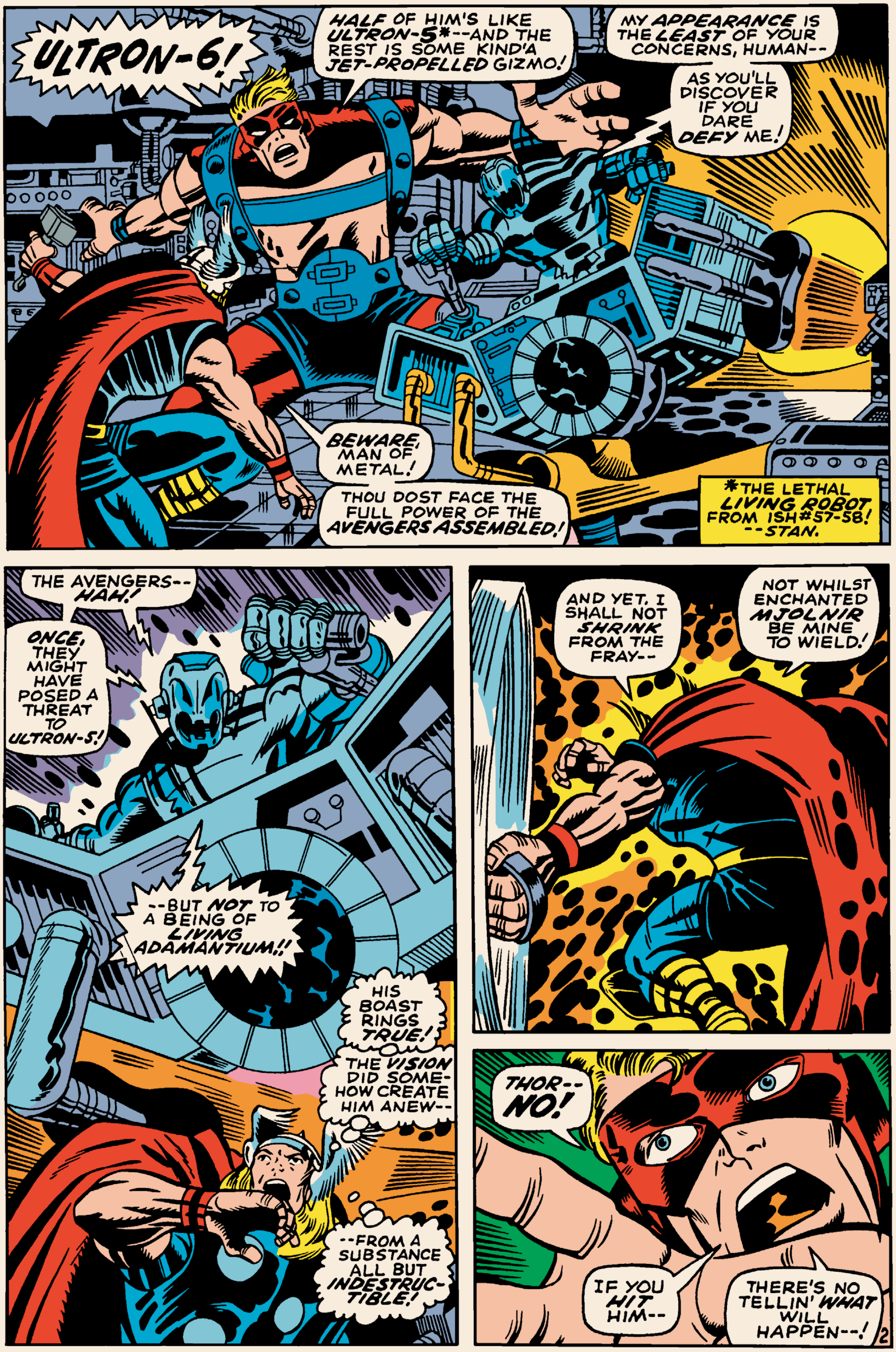

YOU! MY SUSPICIONS WERE CORRECT!
YOU TOOK THE ADAMANTIUM... AND NOW--- THIS!
BUT WHY... WHY?
I'LL TAKE JAN TO SAFETY, HANK!
WITH MY CIRCUITS DAMAGED ...I CAN'T DO MUCH MORE!
MAYBE YOU CAN'T, AVENGER--- BUT I CAN!
BLAST YOU, VISION!
WHY DON'T YOU BECOME SOLID...AND FIGHT LIKE A MAN??
A MAN? BUT I AM NOT A MAN, HENRY PYM!
I AM... AN ANDROID!
BUT, IF YOU WISH TO DO BATTLE WITH A MORE SOLID FOE---
YOU SHALL HAVE YOUR RASH DESIRE...
...TO YOUR OWN SORROW!!
NNNOOooo
17.

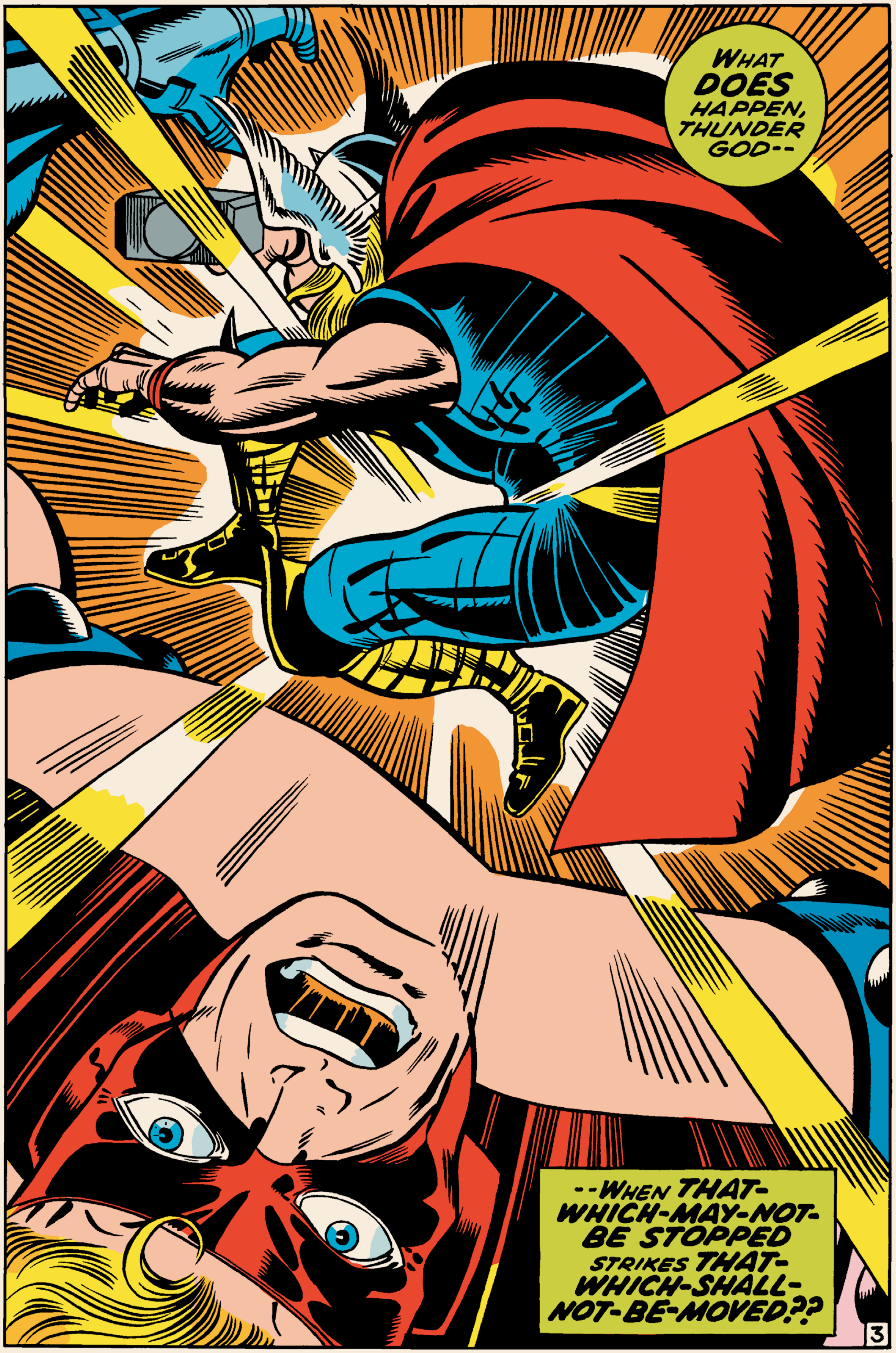

HOLD, THOU BASEST OF BETRAYERS!
THOU HAST STRUCK DOWN ONE OF THE MOST VALIANT OF AVENGERS!
NOW MUST THOU ANSWER TO... THOR!
UHHNN!
ALL THE GRIM TACTICS OF A PERVERTED SCIENCE...
SHALL AVAIL THEE NAUGHT AGAINST THE GOD OF THUNDER!
SPEAK... ERE THE HAND OF JUSTICE DOTH SMITE THEE!
WHY HAST THOU STOLEN THE METAL CALLED ADAMANTIUM...
AND WHEREFORE RETURNED HITHER, TO MENACE FAIREST JAN?
I COULD PASS THRU YOUR POWERFUL HANDS, IMMORTAL...
AS EASILY AS LIGHT THRU GLASS!
BUT INSTEAD...
I PREFER TO DO... THIS!
LET A BLINDING FLASH OF SOLAR ENERGY SHOW YOU WHAT IT MEANS TO OPPOSE... THE VISION!
MINE EYES!
I CANNOT SEE..!
WELL, I CAN, GOLDI-LOCKS...
18

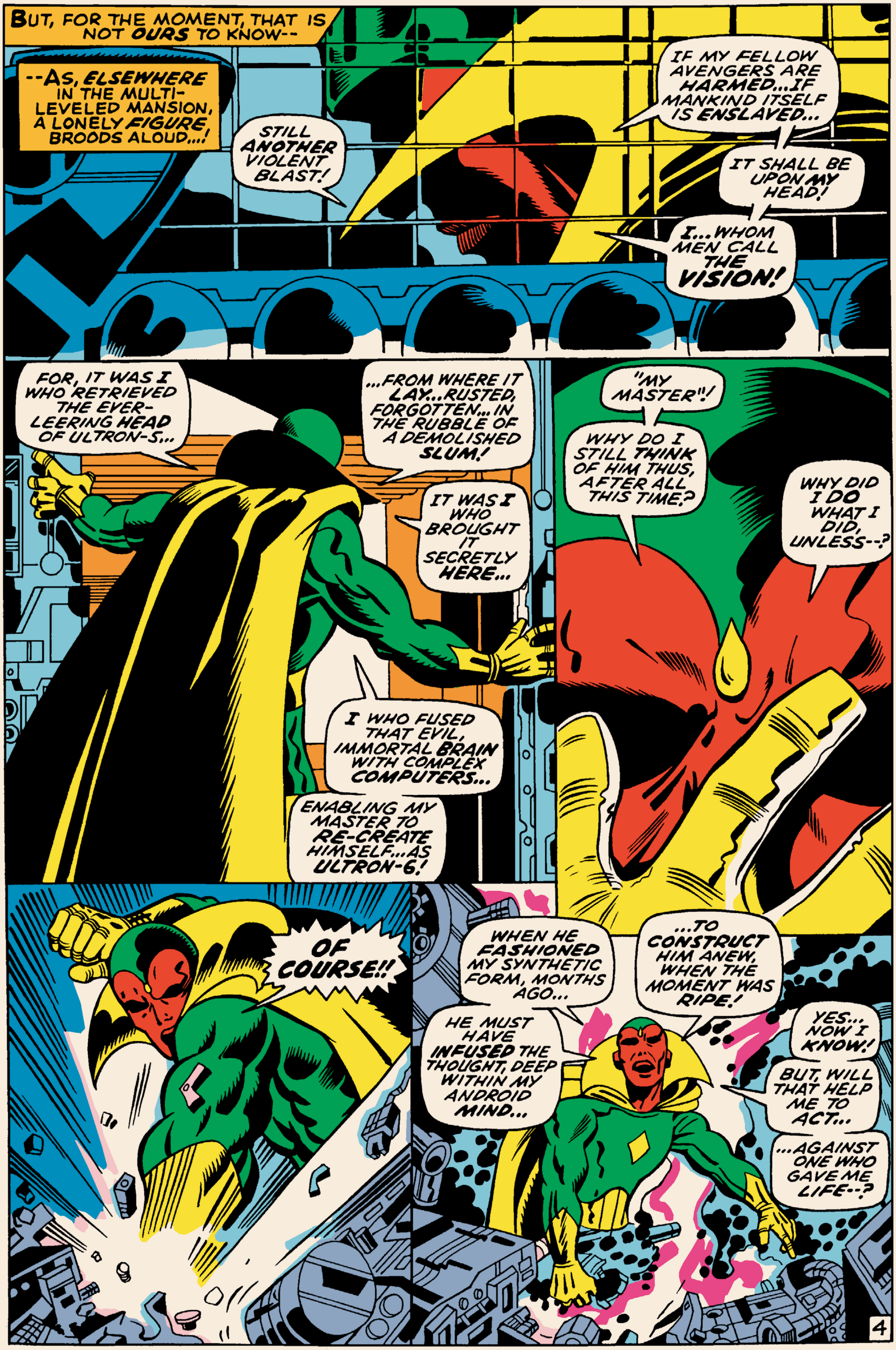

AND NOW, OL' DARK EYES IS GONNA SEE STARS!
WRAAAK
BLAST! I MISSED!!
OR, TO BE MORE PRECISE...
YOU STRUCK WHAT WAS NOT THERE!
YET, WHY DO YOU REMAIN HERE ...A LIVING TARGET?
VERILY, THERE CAN BE BUT ONE REASON...!
TRUE, THUNDER GOD!
IT WAS MY MISSION TO STOP YOU FROM SEARCHING THE MANSION...
...WHILE THE AVENGERS' COMPUTERS PERFORMED A MOST VITAL TASK!
COMPUTERS? THEN, 'TWAS THOU WHO EARLIER DIDST SET THEM AWRY...
THOU WHO DIDST ALMOST SLAY IRON MAN!
THOR... WAIT!
LISTEN! THAT SOUND...!
A RUMBLING ...AS OF SOME DREAD VOLCANO!
BUT, ITS SOURCE... IS BENEATH OUR FEET!
WHAT IN ODIN'S NAME...?
RRRRUUMM
HAVEN'T YOU GUESSED, ASGARDIAN?
THAT SOUND SIGNALS THE BIRTH OF ONE YOU THOUGHT FOREVER GONE---
...OF ONE WHO NOW STANDS COMPOSED OF INDESTRUCTIBLE ADAMANTIUM...
...OF ONE WHO WAS DESTROYED... YET LIVES AGAIN...
19.

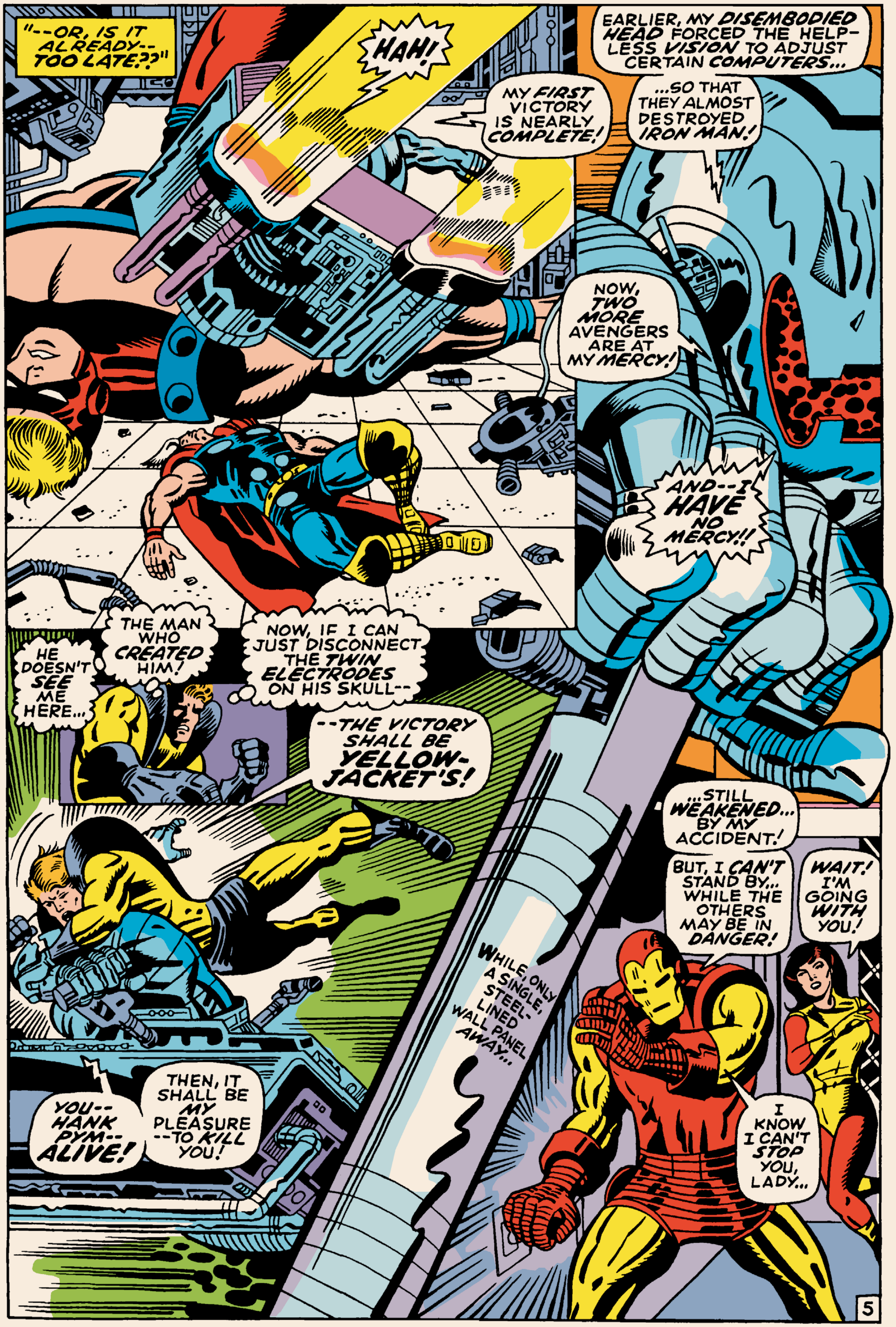

...THE DEADLY, DEATHLESS DREADNOUGHT THAT IS...
ULTRON-6!
NEXT: BUT MEN CAN DIE!!
20

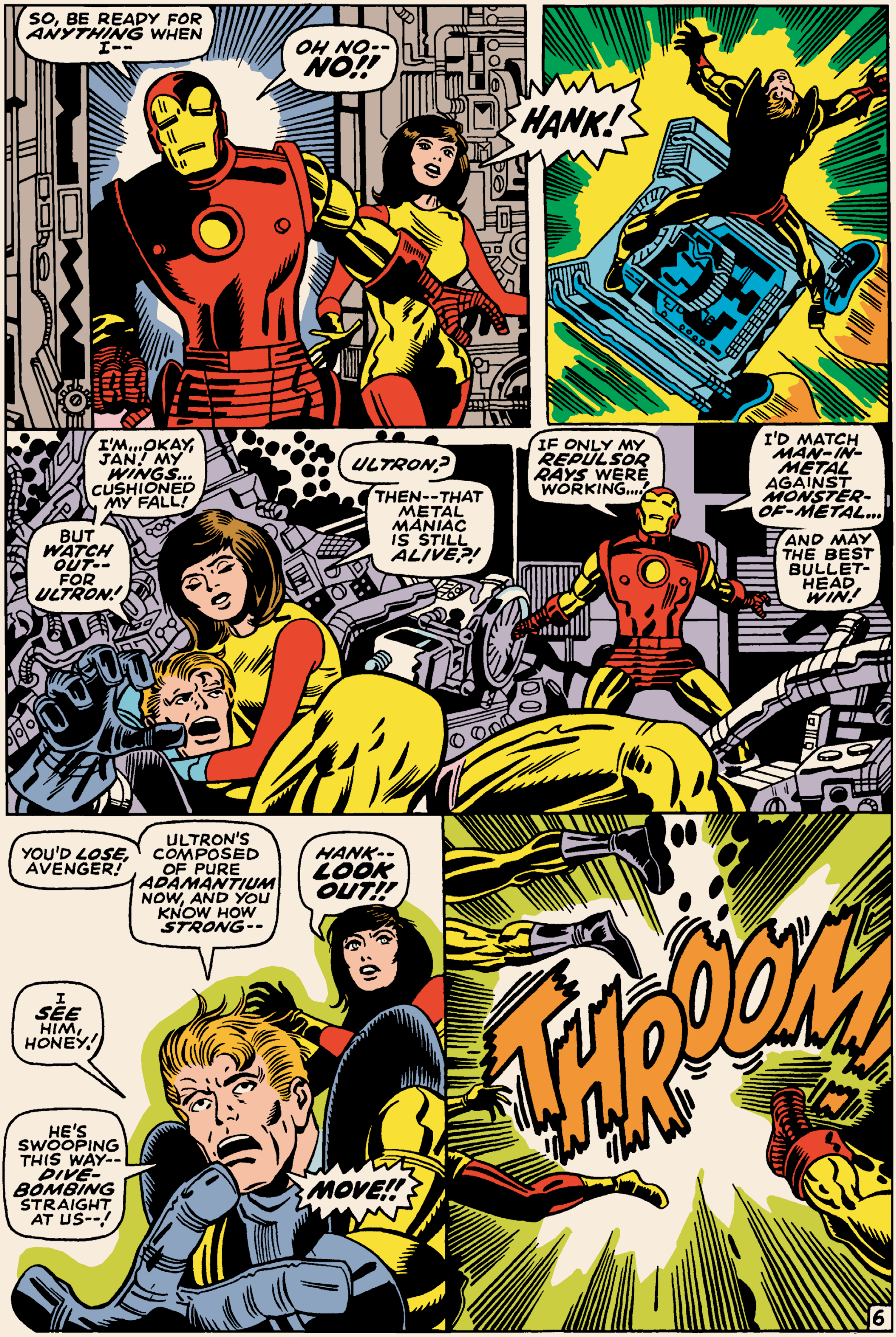

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
WE STAND AT...
ARMAGEDDON!
...YOU HEARD ME, SARGE!
THERE'S A SERIES OF CONTINUAL, DEAFENING EXPLOSIONS--
--ON THE TOP FLOORS OF AVENGERS MANSION!
WAIT-- LISTEN!
FROM WITHIN THE WALLS--THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER--!
BUT SO COLD--SO MANIACALLY CRUEL--
AS IF IT BELONGED TO SOME-THING-- INHUMAN!!
IT DOES, YOUNG LADY--IT DOES! FOR, BEHIND THOSE REINFORCED RAMPARTS, THE MIGHTY AVENGERS ARE BATTLING FOR THEIR VERY LIVES AGAINST THE METAL MONSTROSITY WHICH CALLS ITSELF--
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • BARRY SMITH ARTIST
GEORGE KLEIN INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER
NEW Y
127

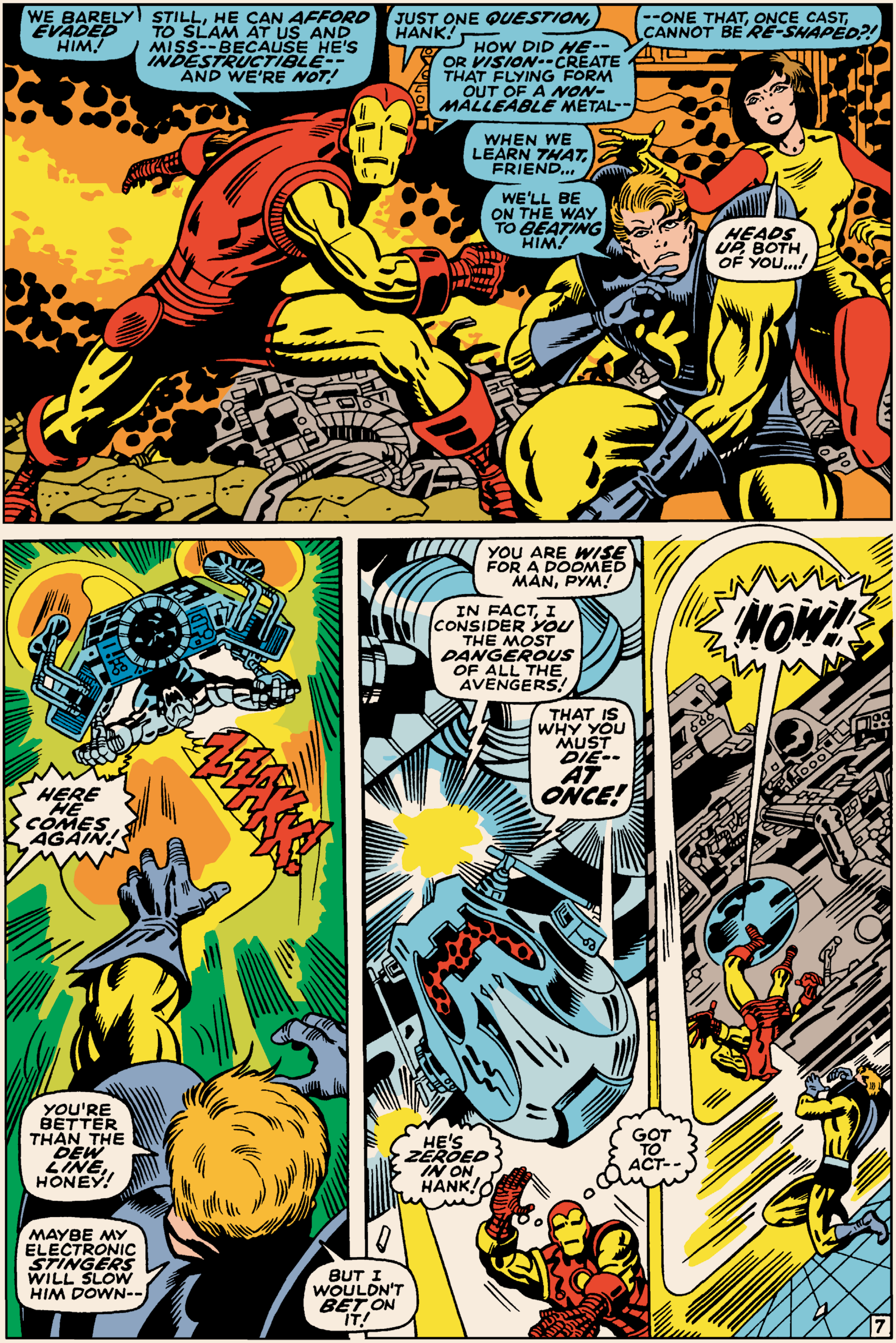

ULTRON-6!
HALF OF HIM'S LIKE ULTRON-5*--AND THE REST IS SOME KIND'A JET-PROPELLED GIZMO!
MY APPEARANCE IS THE LEAST OF YOUR CONCERNS, HUMAN--
AS YOU'LL DISCOVER IF YOU DARE DEFY ME!
BEWARE, MAN OF METAL!
THOU DOST FACE THE FULL POWER OF THE AVENGERS ASSEMBLED!
*THE LETHAL LIVING ROBOT FROM ISH#57-58! --STAN.
THE AVENGERS--HAH!
ONCE, THEY MIGHT HAVE POSED A THREAT TO ULTRON-5!
--BUT NOT TO A BEING OF LIVING ADAMANTIUM!!
HIS BOAST RINGS TRUE!
THE VISION DID SOMEHOW CREATE HIM ANEW--
--FROM A SUBSTANCE ALL BUT INDESTRUCTIBLE!
AND YET, I SHALL NOT SHRINK FROM THE FRAY--
NOT WHILST ENCHANTED MJOLNIR BE MINE TO WIELD!
THOR--NO!
IF YOU HIT HIM--
THERE'S NO TELLIN' WHAT WILL HAPPEN--!
2

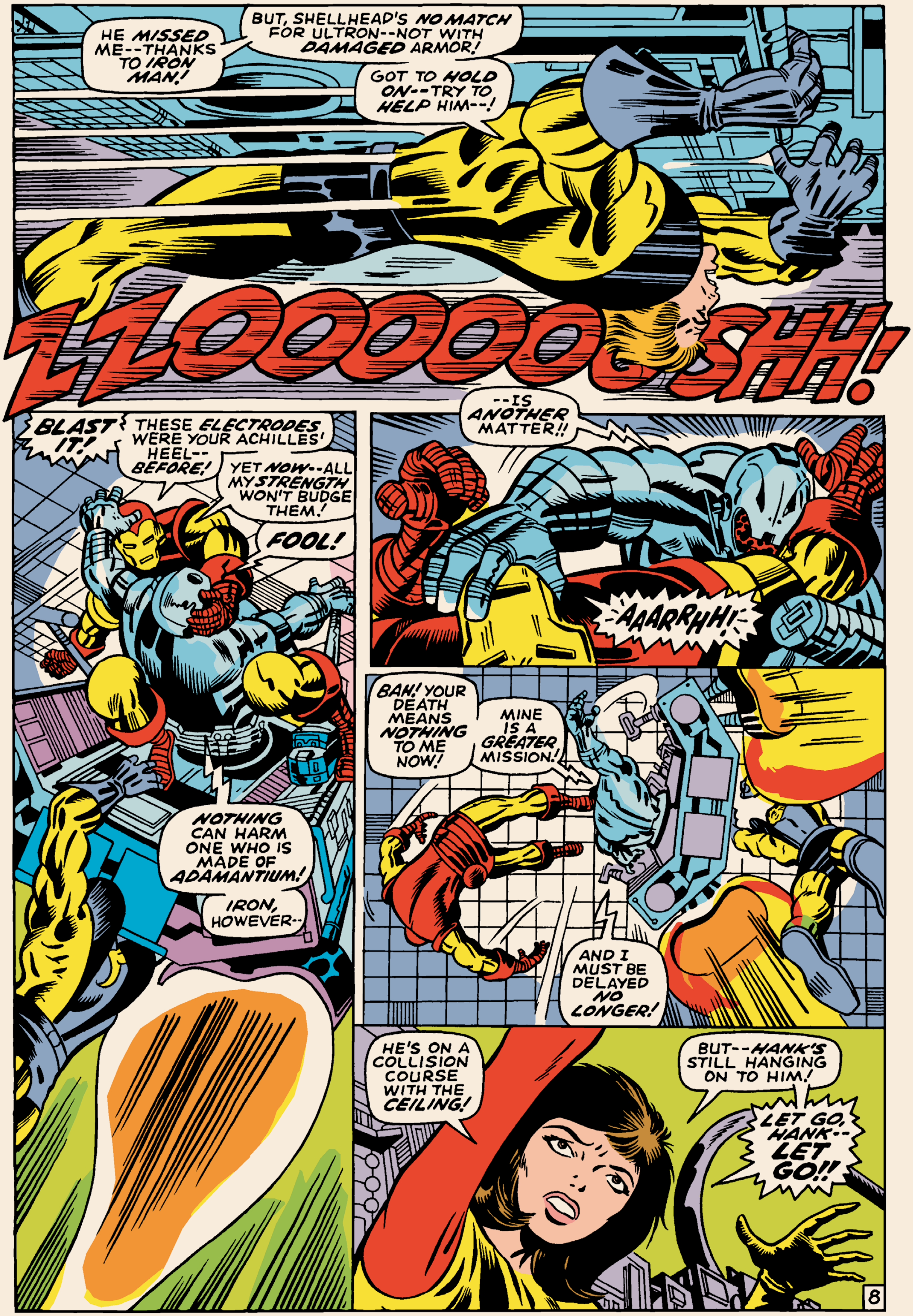

WHAT DOES HAPPEN, THUNDER GOD--
--WHEN THAT-WHICH-MAY-NOT-BE STOPPED STRIKES THAT-WHICH-SHALL-NOT-BE-MOVED??
3

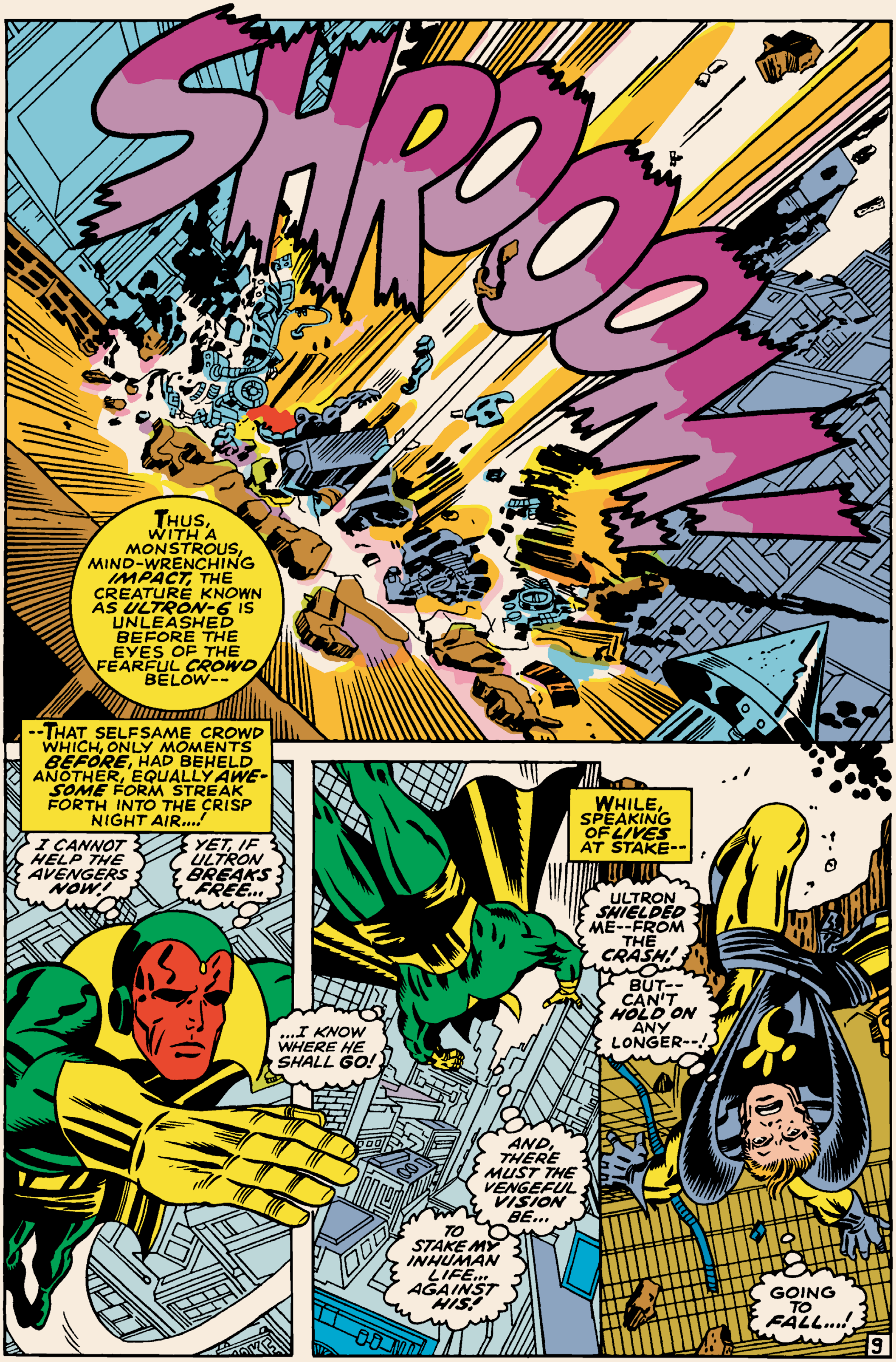

BUT, FOR THE MOMENT, THAT IS NOT OURS TO KNOW--
--AS, ELSEWHERE IN THE MULTI-LEVELED MANSION, A LONELY FIGURE, BROODS ALOUD...!
STILL ANOTHER VIOLENT BLAST!
IF MY FELLOW AVENGERS ARE HARMED...IF MANKIND ITSELF IS ENSLAVED...
IT SHALL BE UPON MY HEAD!
I...WHOM MEN CALL THE VISION!
FOR, IT WAS I WHO RETRIEVED THE EVER-LEERING HEAD OF ULTRON-5...
...FROM WHERE IT LAY...RUSTED, FORGOTTEN... IN THE RUBBLE OF A DEMOLISHED SLUM!
IT WAS I WHO BROUGHT IT SECRETLY HERE...
I WHO FUSED THAT EVIL, IMMORTAL BRAIN WITH COMPLEX COMPUTERS...
ENABLING MY MASTER TO RE-CREATE HIMSELF...AS ULTRON-6!
"MY MASTER"!
WHY DO I STILL THINK OF HIM THUS, AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
WHY DID I DO WHAT I DID, UNLESS--?
OF COURSE!!
WHEN HE FASHIONED MY SYNTHETIC FORM, MONTHS AGO...
...TO CONSTRUCT HIM ANEW, WHEN THE MOMENT WAS RIPE!
HE MUST HAVE INFUSED THE THOUGHT, DEEP WITHIN MY ANDROID MIND...
YES... NOW I KNOW!
BUT, WILL THAT HELP ME TO ACT...
...AGAINST ONE WHO GAVE ME LIFE--?
4

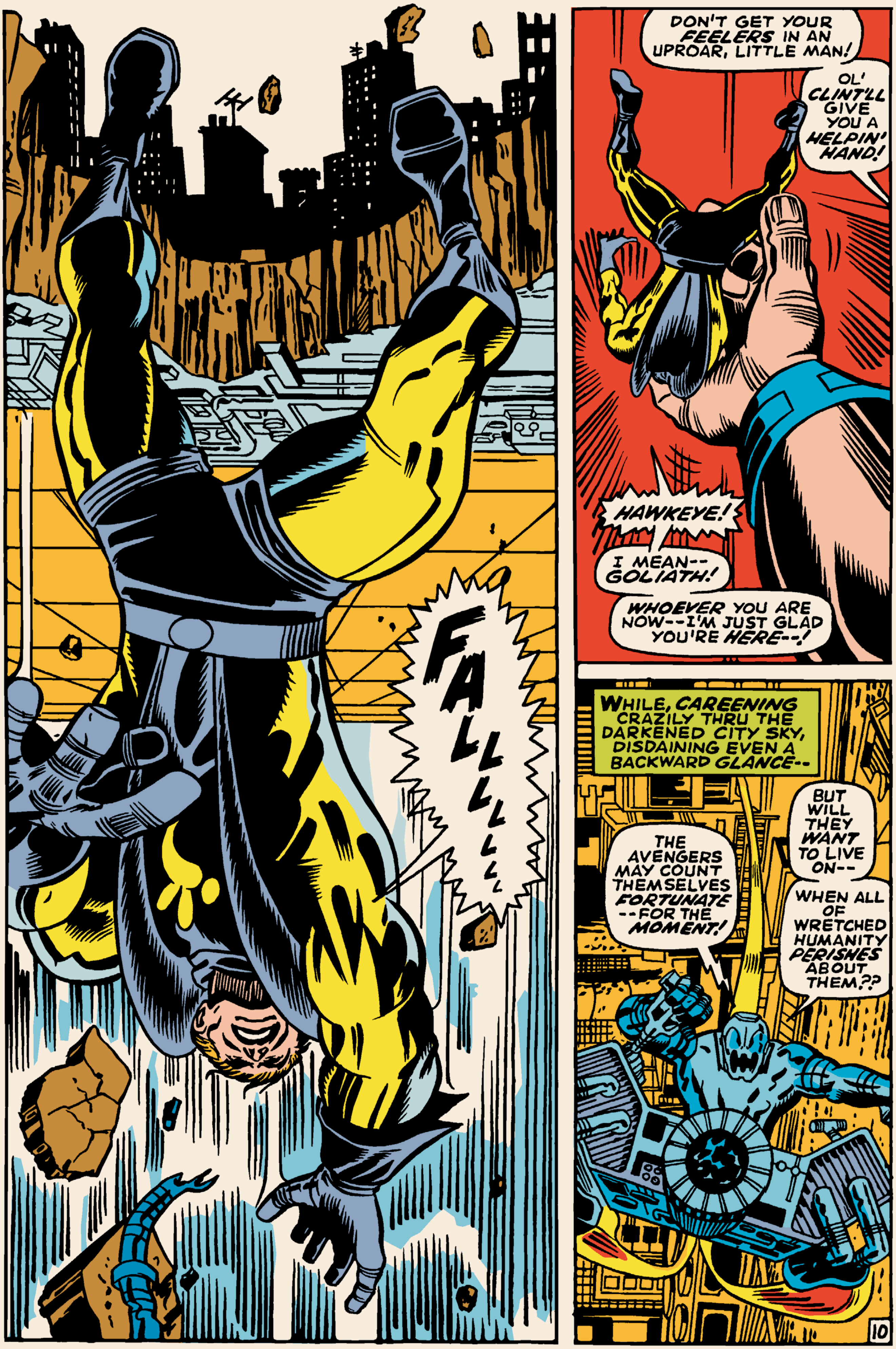

"--OR, IS IT ALREADY-- TOO LATE??"
HAH!
MY FIRST VICTORY IS NEARLY COMPLETE!
EARLIER, MY DISEMBODIED HEAD FORCED THE HELPLESS VISION TO ADJUST CERTAIN COMPUTERS...
...SO THAT THEY ALMOST DESTROYED IRON MAN!
NOW, TWO MORE AVENGERS ARE AT MY MERCY!
AND--I HAVE NO MERCY!!
HE DOESN'T SEE ME HERE...
THE MAN WHO CREATED HIM!
NOW, IF I CAN JUST DISCONNECT THE TWIN ELECTRODES ON HIS SKULL--
--THE VICTORY SHALL BE YELLOWJACKET'S!
YOU--HANK PYM--ALIVE!
THEN, IT SHALL BE MY PLEASURE --TO KILL YOU!
WHILE, ONLY A SINGLE, STEEL-LINED WALL PANEL AWAY...
...STILL WEAKENED... BY MY ACCIDENT!
BUT, I CAN'T STAND BY... WHILE THE OTHERS MAY BE IN DANGER!
WAIT! I'M GOING WITH YOU!
I KNOW I CAN'T STOP YOU, LADY...
5

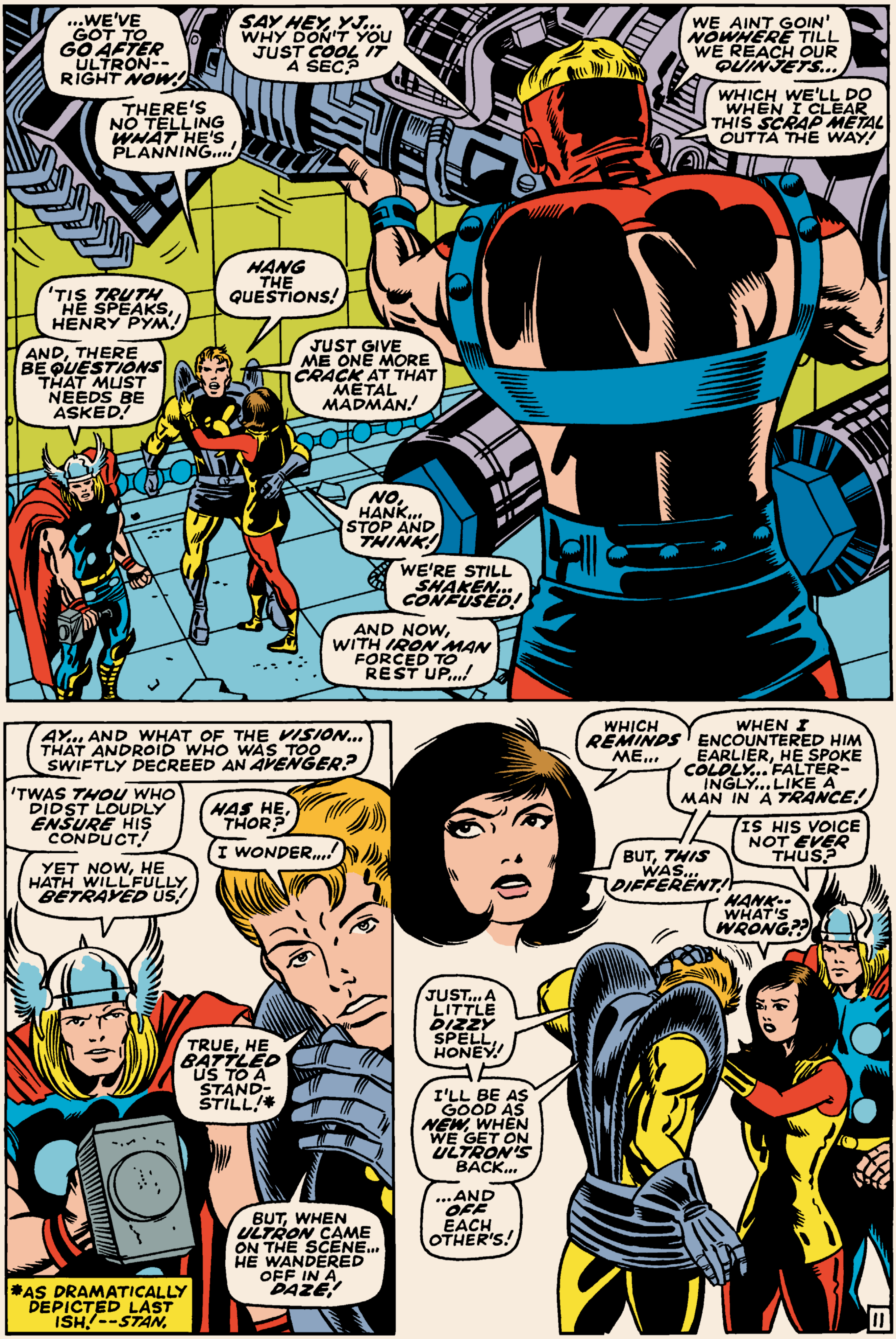

SO, BE READY FOR *ANYTHING* WHEN I--
OH NO-- NO!!
HANK!
I'M...OKAY, JAN! MY *WINGS*... CUSHIONED MY FALL!
BUT *WATCH OUT*-- FOR *ULTRON!*
ULTRON?
THEN--THAT METAL MANIAC IS STILL *ALIVE?!*
IF ONLY MY *REPULSOR RAYS* WERE WORKING...!
I'D MATCH *MAN-IN-METAL* AGAINST *MONSTER-OF-METAL...*
AND MAY THE BEST BULLET-HEAD *WIN!*
YOU'D *LOSE,* AVENGER!
ULTRON'S COMPOSED OF PURE *ADAMANTIUM* NOW, AND YOU KNOW HOW *STRONG*--
HANK-- LOOK OUT!!
I *SEE* HIM, HONEY!
HE'S SWOOPING THIS WAY-- *DIVE-BOMBING* STRAIGHT AT US--!
MOVE!!
THROOOM!
6

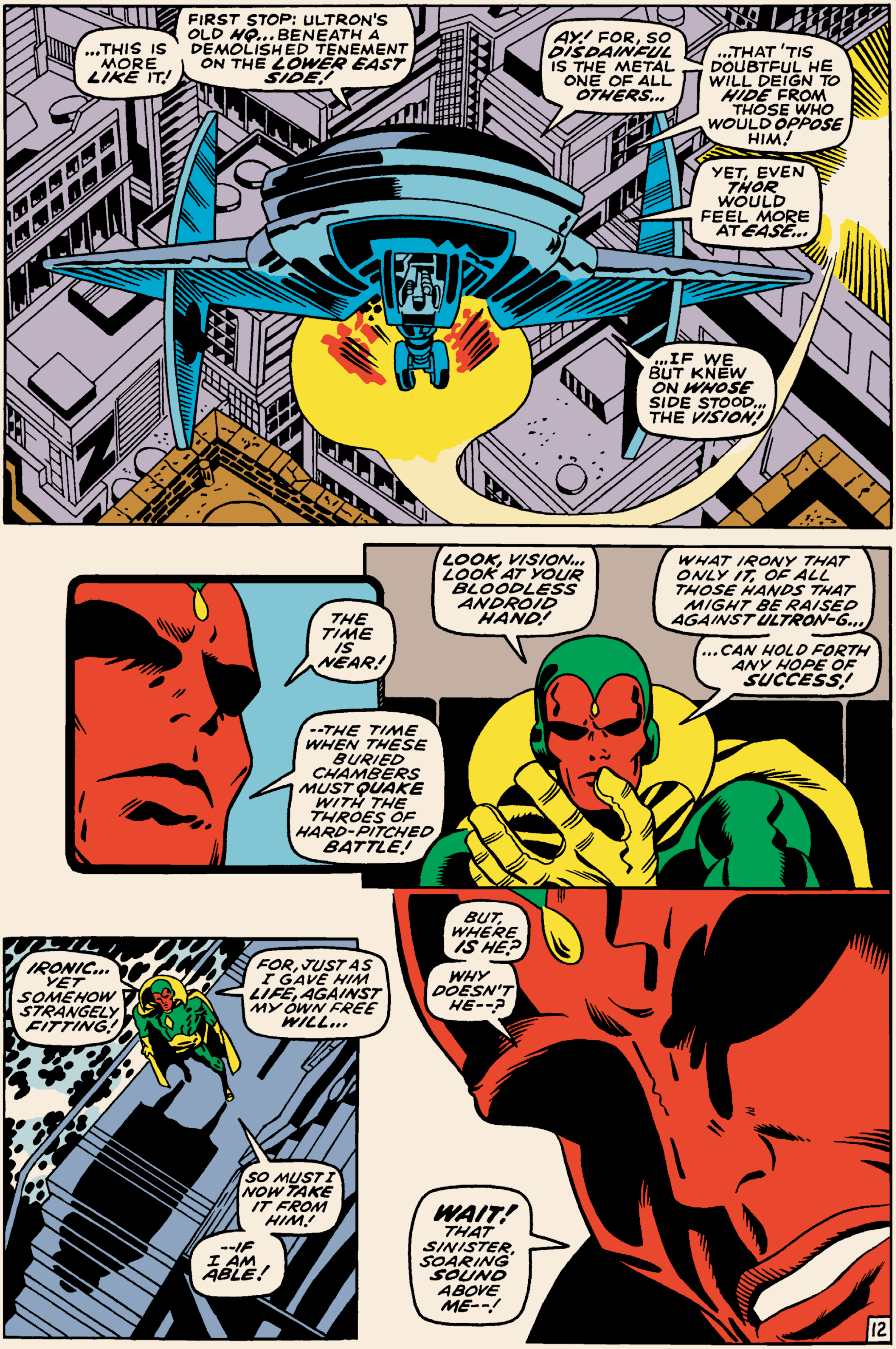

WE BARELY *EVADED* HIM!
STILL, HE CAN *AFFORD* TO SLAM AT US AND MISS--BECAUSE HE'S *INDESTRUCTIBLE*-- AND WE'RE *NOT!*
JUST ONE *QUESTION,* HANK!
HOW DID *HE*-- OR *VISION*--CREATE THAT FLYING FORM OUT OF A *NON-MALLEABLE* METAL--
--ONE THAT, ONCE CAST, CANNOT BE *RE-SHAPED?!*
WHEN WE LEARN *THAT,* FRIEND...
WE'LL BE ON THE WAY TO *BEATING* HIM!
HEADS UP, BOTH OF YOU...!
ZZAKK!
HERE HE COMES AGAIN!
YOU'RE BETTER THAN THE *DEW LINE,* HONEY!
MAYBE MY ELECTRONIC *STINGERS* WILL SLOW HIM DOWN--
BUT I WOULDN'T *BET* ON IT!
YOU ARE *WISE* FOR A DOOMED MAN, PYM!
IN FACT, I CONSIDER *YOU* THE MOST *DANGEROUS* OF ALL THE AVENGERS!
THAT IS WHY YOU MUST *DIE--AT ONCE!*
HE'S *ZEROED IN* ON HANK!
GOT TO ACT--
NOW!
7

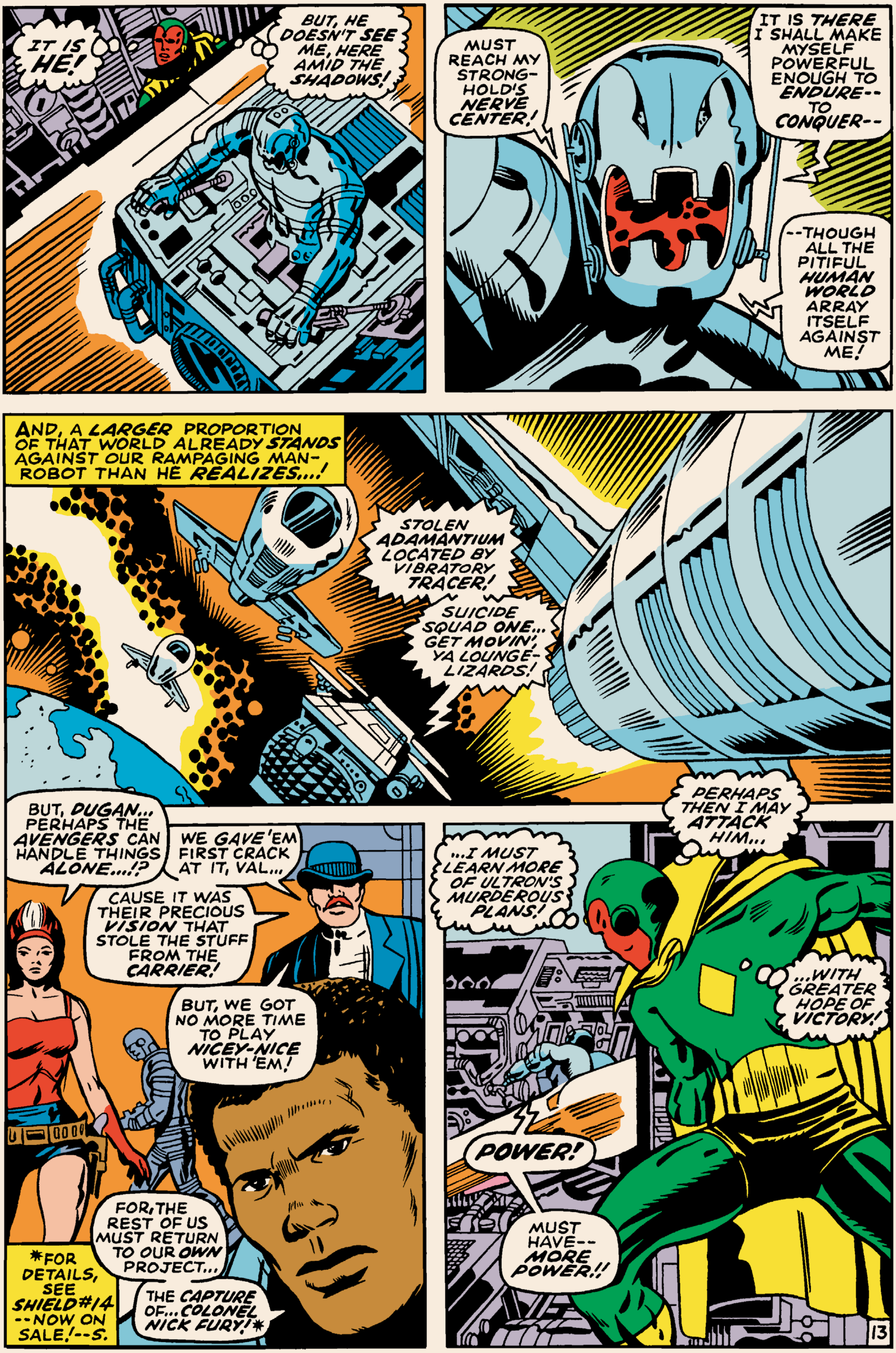

HE MISSED ME--THANKS TO IRON MAN!
BUT, SHELLHEAD'S NO MATCH FOR ULTRON--NOT WITH DAMAGED ARMOR!
GOT TO HOLD ON--TRY TO HELP HIM--!
ZZOOOOOOSHH!
BLAST IT!
THESE ELECTRODES WERE YOUR ACHILLES' HEEL--BEFORE!
YET NOW--ALL MY STRENGTH WON'T BUDGE THEM!
FOOL!
NOTHING CAN HARM ONE WHO IS MADE OF ADAMANTIUM!
IRON, HOWEVER--
--IS ANOTHER MATTER!!
AAARRHH!
BAH! YOUR DEATH MEANS NOTHING TO ME NOW!
MINE IS A GREATER MISSION!
AND I MUST BE DELAYED NO LONGER!
HE'S ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH THE CEILING!
BUT--HANK'S STILL HANGING ON TO HIM!
LET GO, HANK--LET GO!!
8

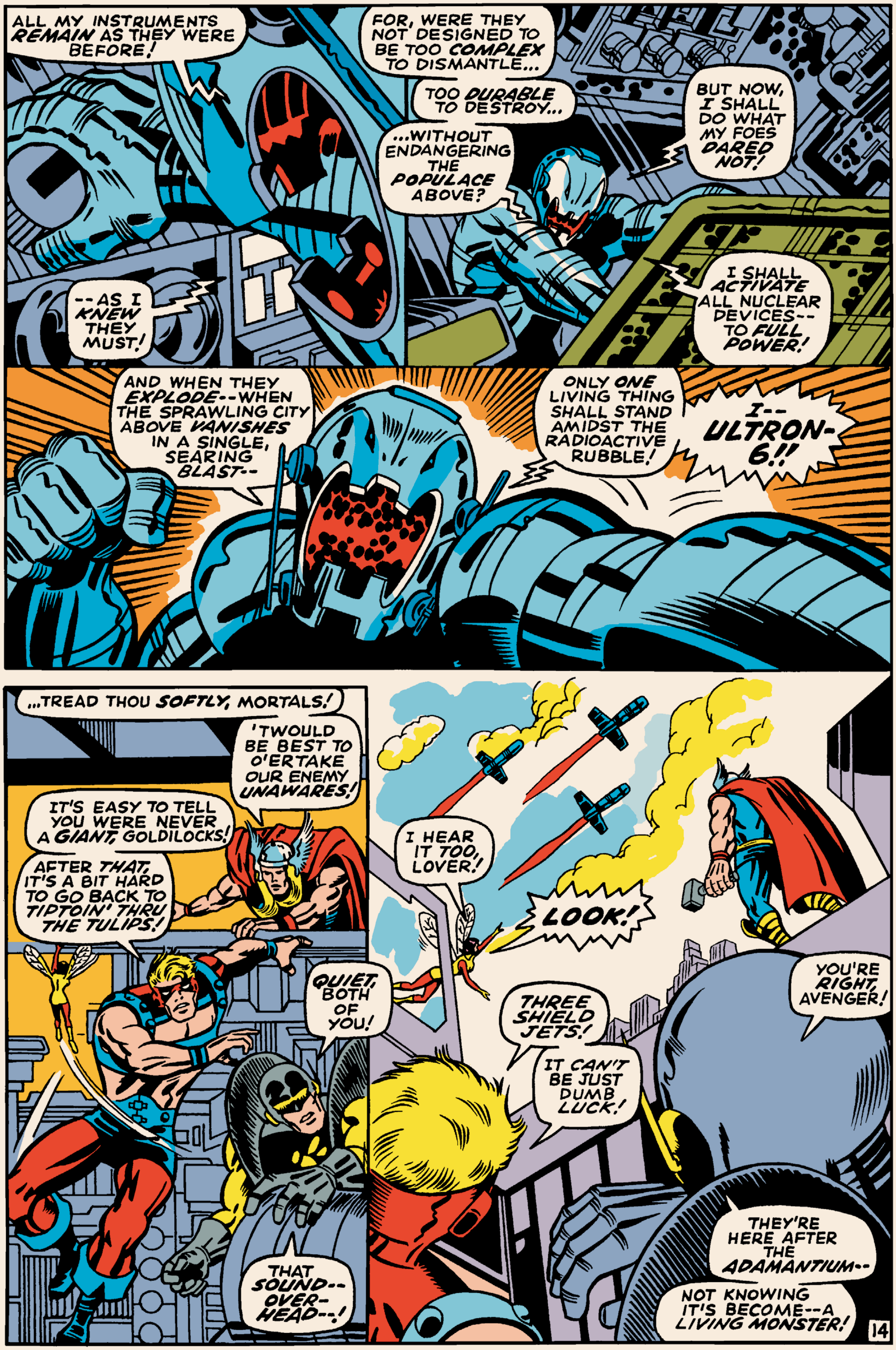

SHROOOM
THUS, WITH A MONSTROUS, MIND-WRENCHING *IMPACT,* THE CREATURE KNOWN AS *ULTRON-6* IS UNLEASHED BEFORE THE EYES OF THE FEARFUL *CROWD* BELOW--
--THAT SELFSAME CROWD WHICH, ONLY MOMENTS *BEFORE,* HAD BEHELD ANOTHER, EQUALLY *AWESOME* FORM STREAK FORTH INTO THE CRISP NIGHT AIR...!
I CANNOT HELP THE AVENGERS NOW!
YET, IF ULTRON *BREAKS FREE...*
...I KNOW WHERE HE SHALL GO!
AND, THERE MUST THE VENGEFUL *VISION* BE...
TO STAKE MY INHUMAN LIFE... AGAINST HIS!
WHILE, SPEAKING OF *LIVES* AT STAKE--
ULTRON *SHIELDED* ME--FROM THE *CRASH!*
BUT--CAN'T *HOLD ON* ANY LONGER--!
GOING TO *FALL...!*
9

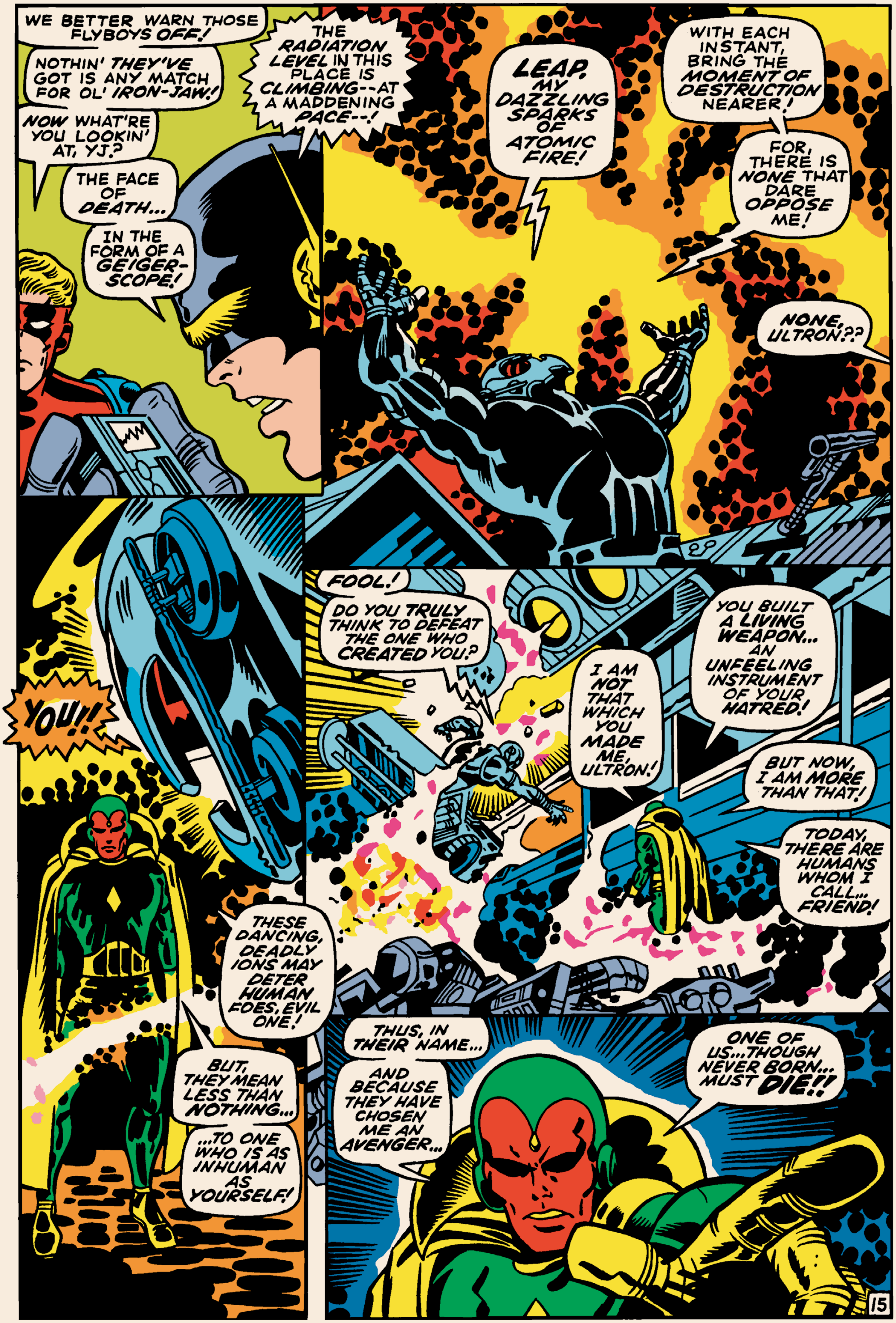

FALLLLLL
DON'T GET YOUR *FEELERS* IN AN UPROAR, LITTLE MAN!
OL' *CLINT'LL* GIVE YOU A *HELPIN' HAND!*
HAWKEYE!
I MEAN-- *GOLIATH!*
WHOEVER YOU ARE NOW--I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE *HERE*--!
WHILE, *CAREENING* CRAZILY THRU THE DARKENED CITY SKY, DISDAINING EVEN A BACKWARD *GLANCE*--
THE AVENGERS MAY COUNT THEMSELVES *FORTUNATE* --FOR THE *MOMENT!*
BUT WILL THEY *WANT* TO LIVE ON--
WHEN ALL OF WRETCHED HUMANITY *PERISHES* ABOUT THEM??
10

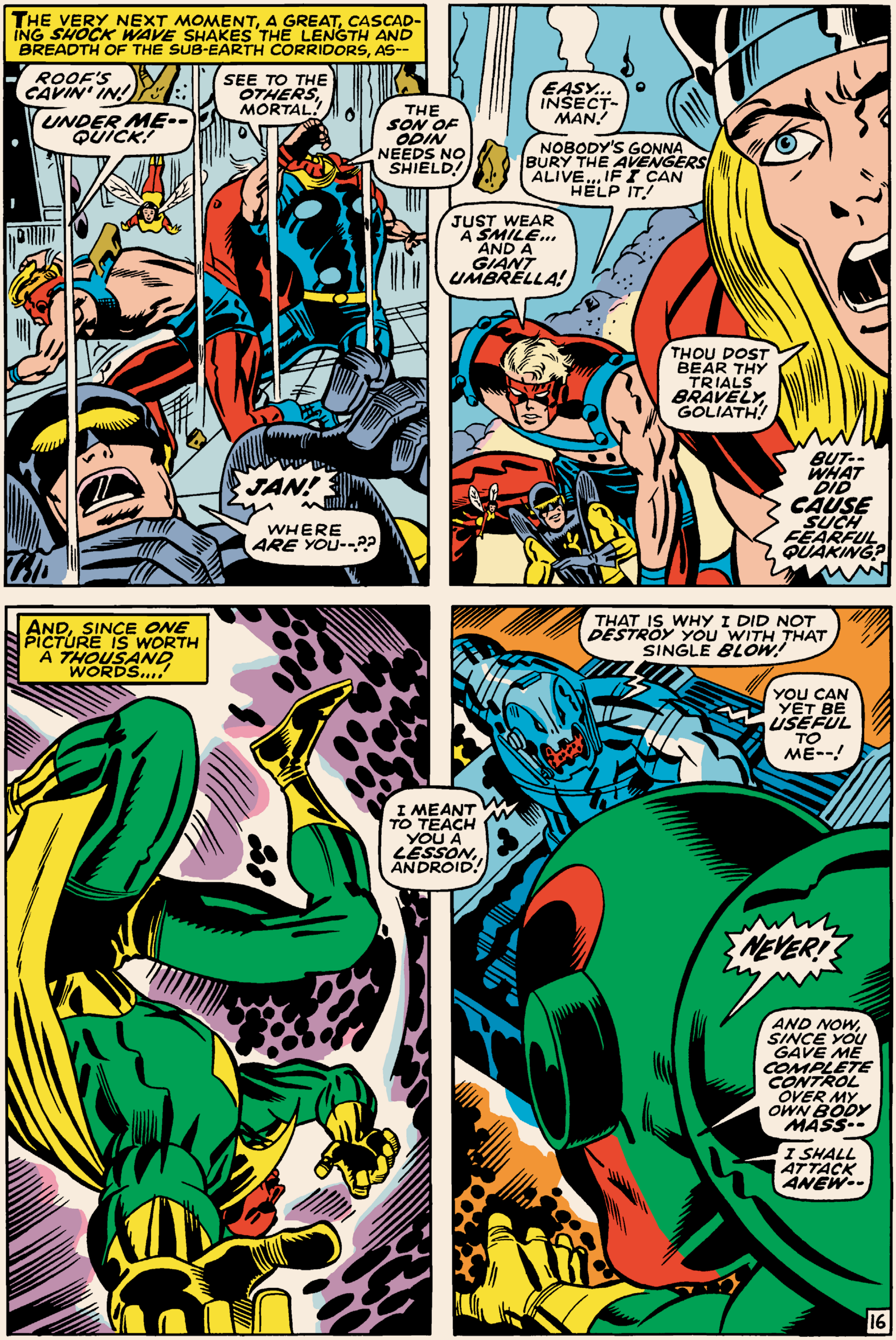

...WE'VE GOT TO GO AFTER ULTRON--RIGHT NOW!
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'S PLANNING....!
SAY HEY, YJ... WHY DON'T YOU JUST COOL IT A SEC?
WE AINT GOIN' NOWHERE TILL WE REACH OUR QUINJETS...
WHICH WE'LL DO WHEN I CLEAR THIS SCRAP METAL OUTTA THE WAY!
HANG THE QUESTIONS!
'TIS TRUTH HE SPEAKS, HENRY PYM!
AND, THERE BE QUESTIONS THAT MUST NEEDS BE ASKED!
JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE CRACK AT THAT METAL MADMAN!
NO, HANK... STOP AND THINK!
WE'RE STILL SHAKEN... CONFUSED!
AND NOW, WITH IRON MAN FORCED TO REST UP...!
AY... AND WHAT OF THE VISION... THAT ANDROID WHO WAS TOO SWIFTLY DECREED AN AVENGER?
'TWAS THOU WHO DIDST LOUDLY ENSURE HIS CONDUCT!
YET NOW, HE HATH WILLFULLY BETRAYED US!
HAS HE, THOR?
I WONDER....!
TRUE, HE BATTLED US TO A STANDSTILL!*
BUT, WHEN ULTRON CAME ON THE SCENE... HE WANDERED OFF IN A DAZE!
*AS DRAMATICALLY DEPICTED LAST ISH!--STAN.
WHICH REMINDS ME...
WHEN I ENCOUNTERED HIM EARLIER, HE SPOKE COLDLY... FALTERINGLY... LIKE A MAN IN A TRANCE!
BUT, THIS WAS... DIFFERENT!
IS HIS VOICE NOT EVER THUS?
HANK-- WHAT'S WRONG??
JUST... A LITTLE DIZZY SPELL, HONEY!
I'LL BE AS GOOD AS NEW, WHEN WE GET ON ULTRON'S BACK...
...AND OFF EACH OTHER'S!
11

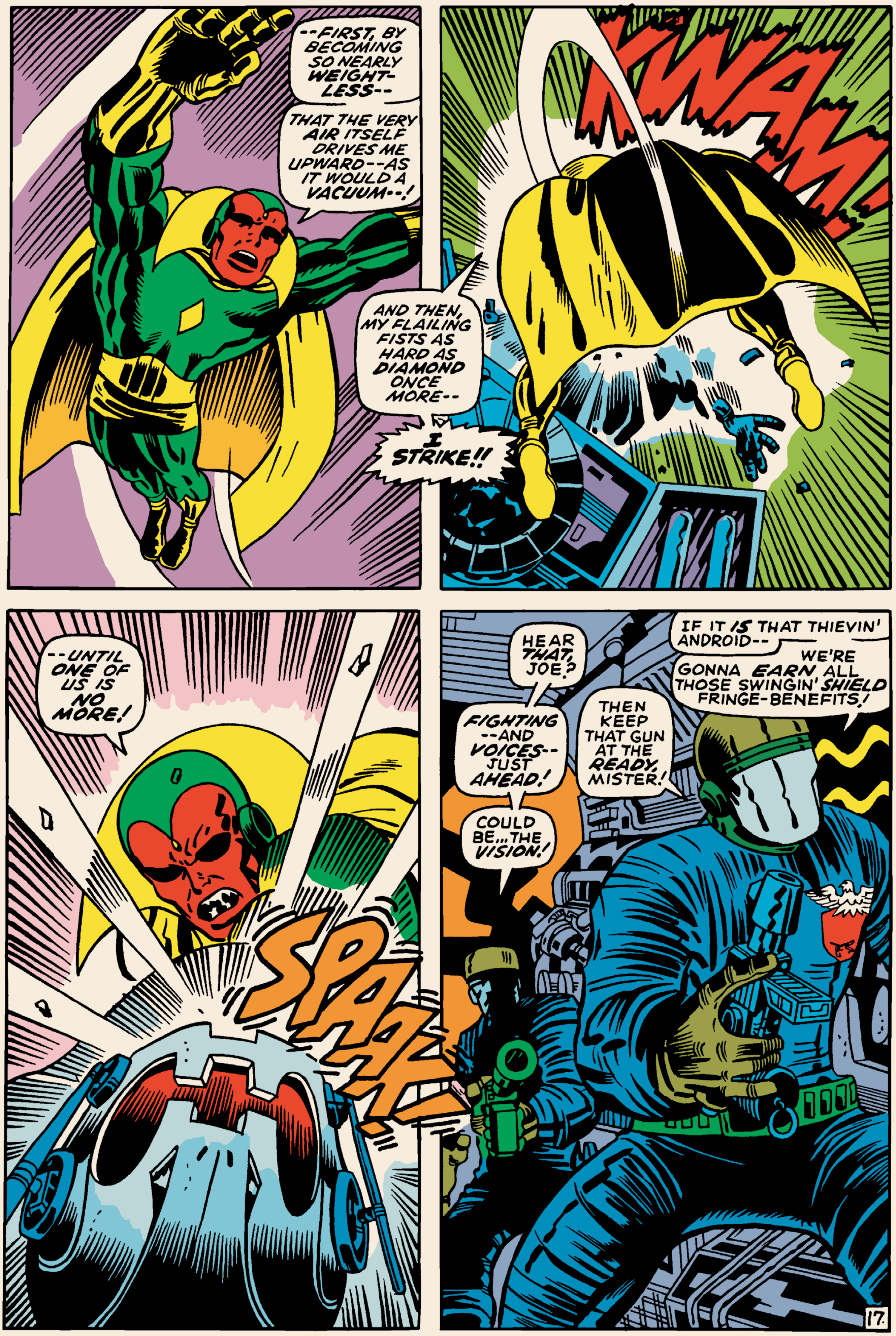

...THIS IS MORE LIKE IT!
FIRST STOP: ULTRON'S OLD HQ... BENEATH A DEMOLISHED TENEMENT ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE!
AY! FOR, SO DISDAINFUL IS THE METAL ONE OF ALL OTHERS...
...THAT 'TIS DOUBTFUL HE WILL DEIGN TO HIDE FROM THOSE WHO WOULD OPPOSE HIM!
YET, EVEN THOR WOULD FEEL MORE AT EASE...
...IF WE BUT KNEW ON WHOSE SIDE STOOD... THE VISION!
THE TIME IS NEAR!
--THE TIME WHEN THESE BURIED CHAMBERS MUST QUAKE WITH THE THROES OF HARD-PITCHED BATTLE!
LOOK, VISION... LOOK AT YOUR BLOODLESS ANDROID HAND!
WHAT IRONY THAT ONLY IT, OF ALL THOSE HANDS THAT MIGHT BE RAISED AGAINST ULTRON-6...
...CAN HOLD FORTH ANY HOPE OF SUCCESS!
IRONIC... YET SOMEHOW STRANGELY FITTING!
FOR, JUST AS I GAVE HIM LIFE, AGAINST MY OWN FREE WILL...
SO MUST I NOW TAKE IT FROM HIM!
--IF I AM ABLE!
BUT, WHERE IS HE?
WHY DOESN'T HE--?
WAIT! THAT SINISTER, SOARING SOUND ABOVE ME--!
12

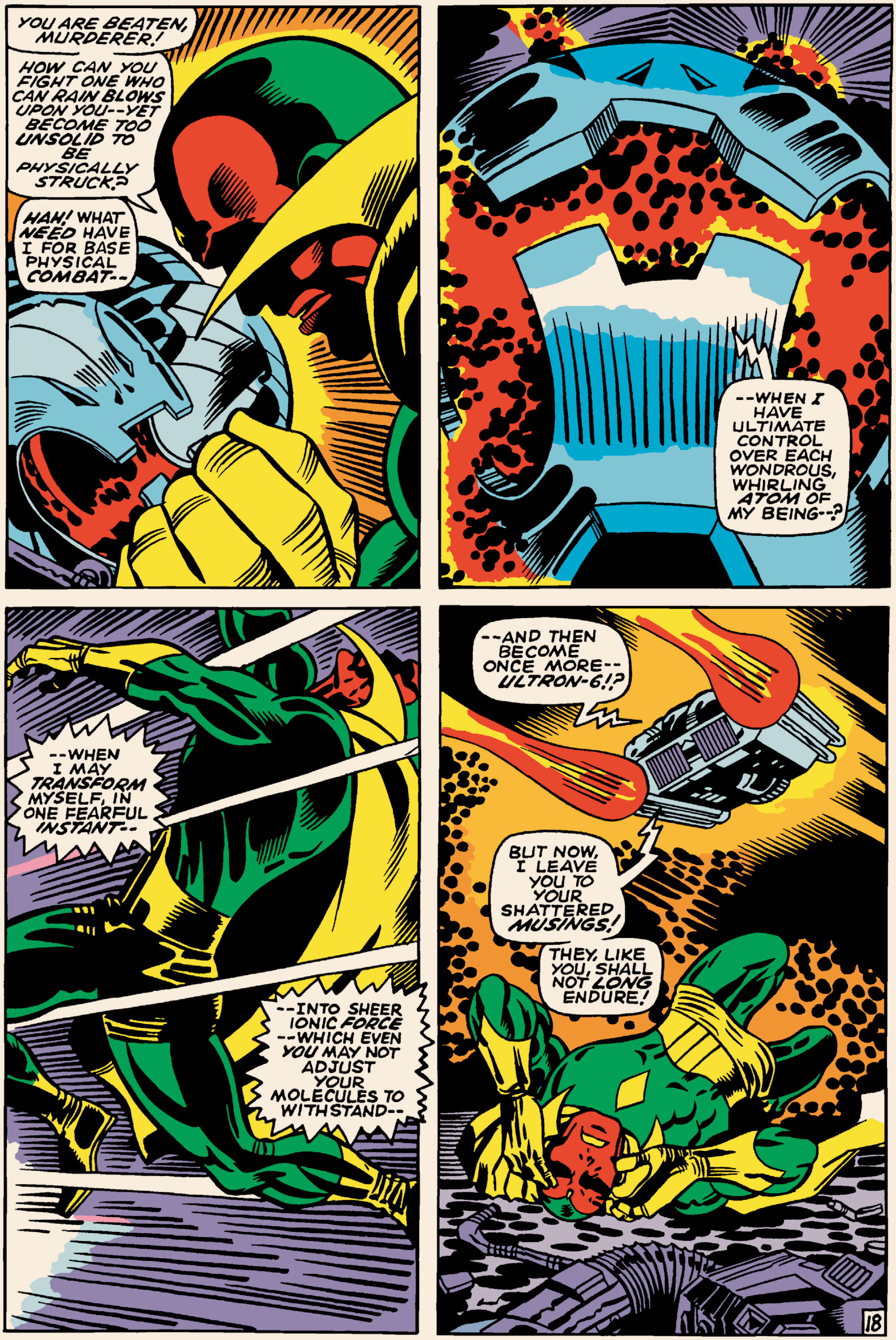

IT IS HE!
BUT, HE DOESN'T SEE ME, HERE AMID THE SHADOWS!
MUST REACH MY STRONGHOLD'S NERVE CENTER!
IT IS THERE I SHALL MAKE MYSELF POWERFUL ENOUGH TO ENDURE-- TO CONQUER--
--THOUGH ALL THE PITIFUL HUMAN WORLD ARRAY ITSELF AGAINST ME!
AND, A LARGER PROPORTION OF THAT WORLD ALREADY STANDS AGAINST OUR RAMPAGING MAN-ROBOT THAN HE REALIZES...!
STOLEN ADAMANTIUM LOCATED BY VIBRATORY TRACER!
SUICIDE SQUAD ONE... GET MOVIN', YA LOUNGE-LIZARDS!
BUT, DUGAN... PERHAPS THE AVENGERS CAN HANDLE THINGS ALONE...!?
WE GAVE 'EM FIRST CRACK AT IT, VAL...
CAUSE IT WAS THEIR PRECIOUS VISION THAT STOLE THE STUFF FROM THE CARRIER!
BUT, WE GOT NO MORE TIME TO PLAY NICEY-NICE WITH 'EM!
FOR, THE REST OF US MUST RETURN TO OUR OWN PROJECT...
THE CAPTURE OF... COLONEL NICK FURY!*
*FOR DETAILS, SEE SHIELD #14 --NOW ON SALE!--S.
PERHAPS THEN I MAY ATTACK HIM...
...I MUST LEARN MORE OF ULTRON'S MURDEROUS PLANS!
...WITH GREATER HOPE OF VICTORY!
POWER!
MUST HAVE-- MORE POWER!!
13

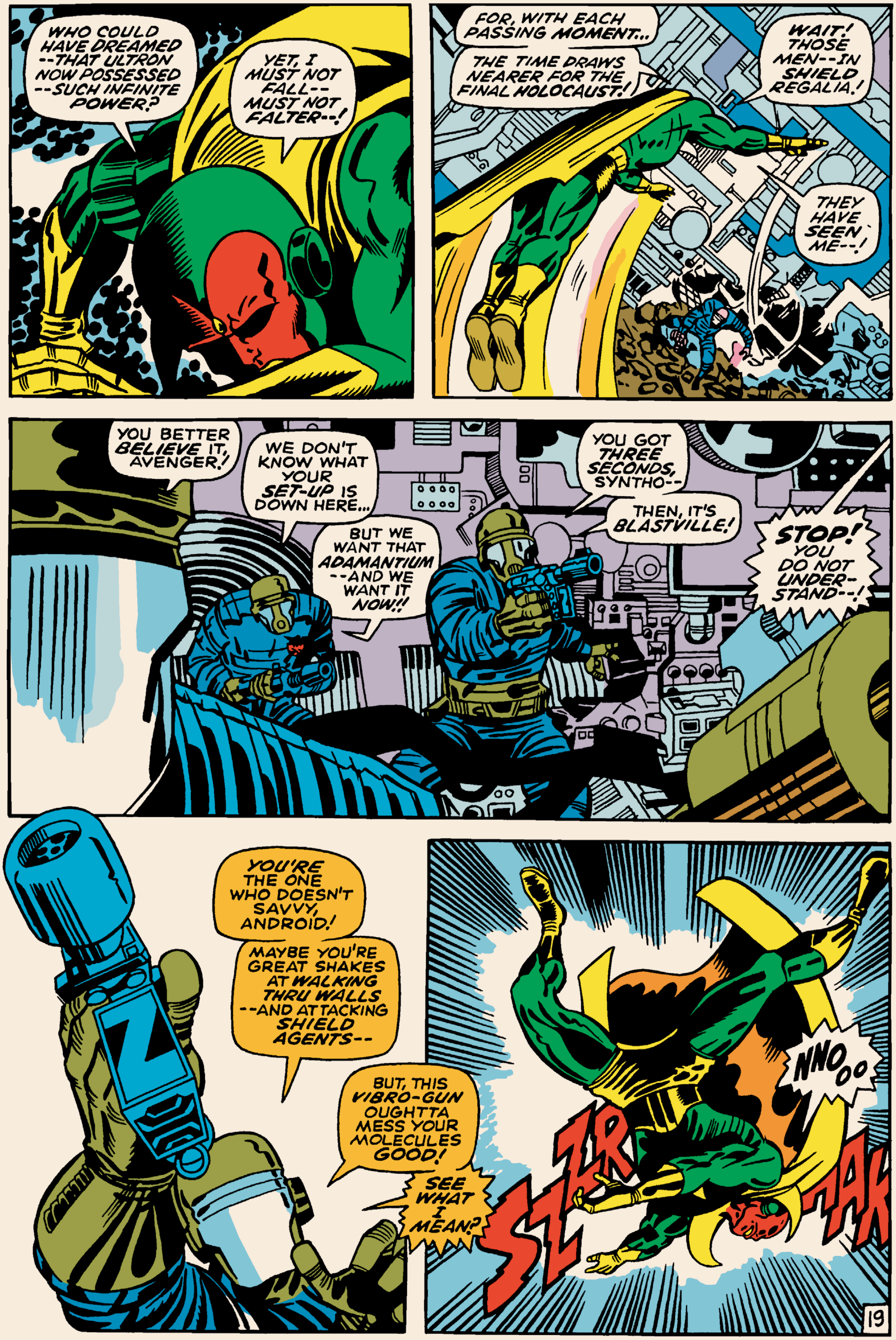

ALL MY INSTRUMENTS *REMAIN* AS THEY WERE BEFORE!
--AS I *KNEW* THEY MUST!
FOR, WERE THEY NOT DESIGNED TO BE TOO *COMPLEX* TO DISMANTLE...
TOO *DURABLE* TO DESTROY...
...WITHOUT ENDANGERING THE *POPULACE* ABOVE?
BUT NOW, *I* SHALL DO WHAT MY FOES *DARED NOT!*
I SHALL *ACTIVATE* ALL NUCLEAR DEVICES--TO *FULL POWER!*
AND WHEN THEY *EXPLODE*--WHEN THE SPRAWLING CITY ABOVE *VANISHES* IN A SINGLE, SEARING *BLAST*--
ONLY *ONE* LIVING THING SHALL STAND AMIDST THE RADIOACTIVE RUBBLE!
I--ULTRON-6!!
...TREAD THOU *SOFTLY,* MORTALS!
'TWOULD BE BEST TO O'ERTAKE OUR ENEMY *UNAWARES!*
IT'S EASY TO TELL YOU WERE NEVER A *GIANT,* GOLDILOCKS!
AFTER *THAT,* IT'S A BIT HARD TO GO BACK TO *TIPTOIN' THRU THE TULIPS!*
QUIET, BOTH OF YOU!
THAT *SOUND--OVER-HEAD--!*
I HEAR IT *TOO,* LOVER!
LOOK!
THREE SHIELD JETS!
IT *CAN'T* BE JUST DUMB *LUCK!*
YOU'RE *RIGHT,* AVENGER!
THEY'RE HERE AFTER THE *ADAMANTIUM*--
NOT KNOWING IT'S BECOME--A *LIVING MONSTER!*
14

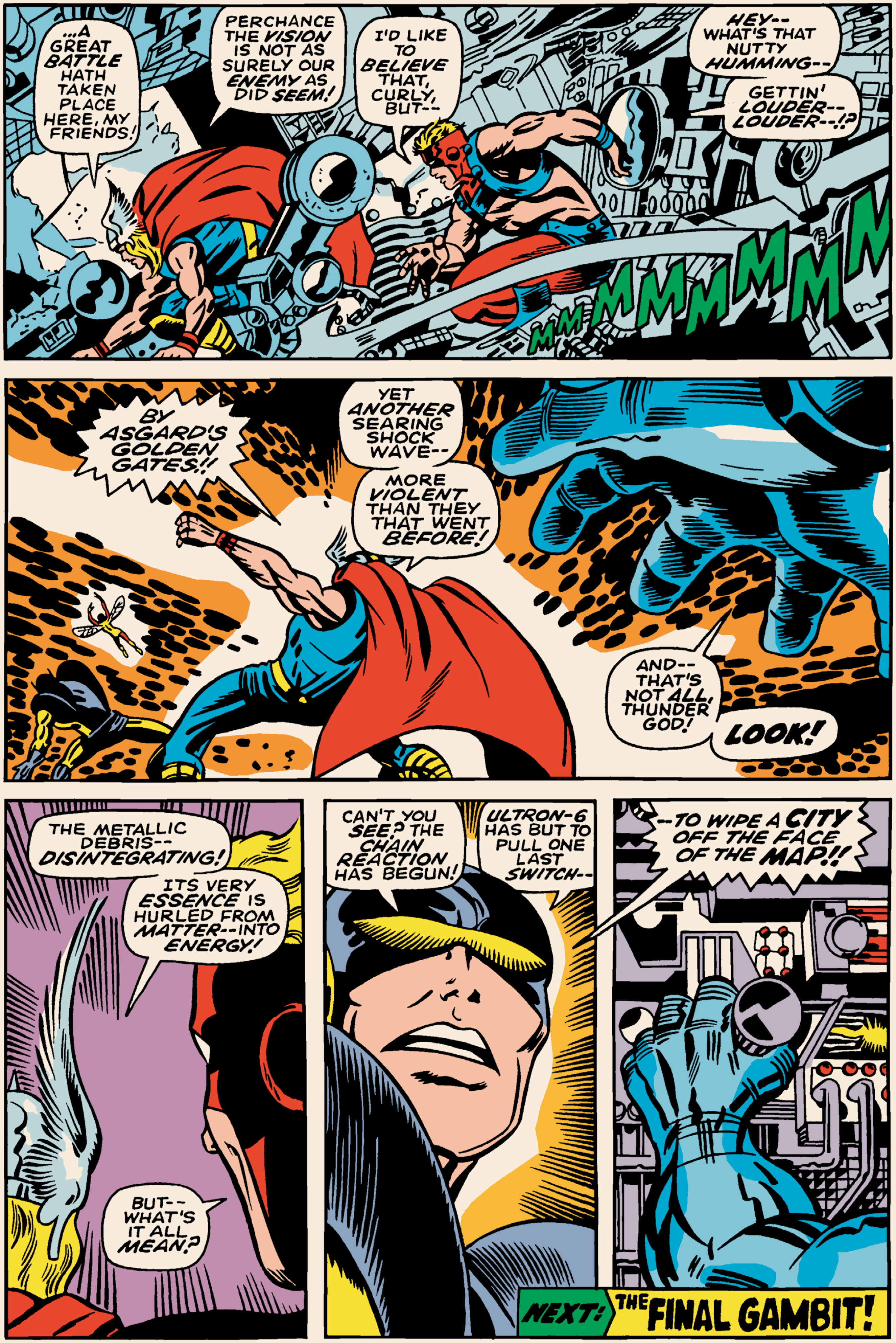

WE BETTER WARN THOSE FLYBOYS OFF!
NOTHIN' THEY'VE GOT IS ANY MATCH FOR OL' IRON-JAW!
THE RADIATION LEVEL IN THIS PLACE IS CLIMBING--AT A MADDENING PACE--!
NOW WHAT'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT, YJ.?
THE FACE OF DEATH...
IN THE FORM OF A GEIGER-SCOPE!
LEAP, MY DAZZLING SPARKS OF ATOMIC FIRE!
WITH EACH INSTANT, BRING THE MOMENT OF DESTRUCTION NEARER!
FOR, THERE IS NONE THAT DARE OPPOSE ME!
NONE, ULTRON??
YOU!!
THESE DANCING, DEADLY IONS MAY DETER HUMAN FOES, EVIL ONE!
BUT, THEY MEAN LESS THAN NOTHING...
...TO ONE WHO IS AS INHUMAN AS YOURSELF!
FOOL!
DO YOU TRULY THINK TO DEFEAT THE ONE WHO CREATED YOU?
I AM NOT THAT WHICH YOU MADE ME, ULTRON!
YOU BUILT A LIVING WEAPON... AN UNFEELING INSTRUMENT OF YOUR HATRED!
BUT NOW, I AM MORE THAN THAT!
TODAY, THERE ARE HUMANS WHOM I CALL... FRIEND!
THUS, IN THEIR NAME...
AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE CHOSEN ME AN AVENGER...
ONE OF US...THOUGH NEVER BORN... MUST DIE!!
15


THE VERY NEXT MOMENT, A GREAT, CASCADING SHOCK WAVE SHAKES THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THE SUB-EARTH CORRIDORS, AS--
ROOF'S CAVIN' IN!
UNDER ME-- QUICK!
SEE TO THE OTHERS, MORTAL!
THE SON OF ODIN NEEDS NO SHIELD!
JAN!
WHERE ARE YOU--??
EASY... INSECT-MAN!
NOBODY'S GONNA BURY THE AVENGERS ALIVE... IF I CAN HELP IT!
JUST WEAR A SMILE... AND A GIANT UMBRELLA!
THOU DOST BEAR THY TRIALS BRAVELY, GOLIATH!
BUT-- WHAT DID CAUSE SUCH FEARFUL QUAKING?
AND, SINCE ONE PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS....!
THAT IS WHY I DID NOT DESTROY YOU WITH THAT SINGLE BLOW!
YOU CAN YET BE USEFUL TO ME--!
I MEANT TO TEACH YOU A LESSON, ANDROID!
NEVER!
AND NOW, SINCE YOU GAVE ME COMPLETE CONTROL OVER MY OWN BODY MASS--
I SHALL ATTACK ANEW--
16

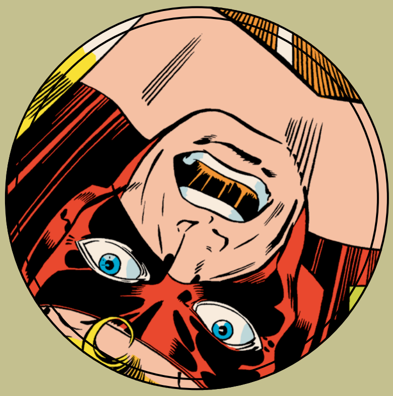

--FIRST, BY BECOMING SO NEARLY WEIGHTLESS--
THAT THE VERY AIR ITSELF DRIVES ME UPWARD--AS IT WOULD A VACUUM--!
AND THEN, MY FLAILING FISTS AS HARD AS DIAMOND ONCE MORE--
I STRIKE!!
KWAM!
--UNTIL ONE OF US IS NO MORE!
SPAAK!
HEAR THAT, JOE?
IF IT IS THAT THIEVIN' ANDROID-- WE'RE GONNA EARN ALL THOSE SWINGIN' SHIELD FRINGE-BENEFITS!
FIGHTING--AND VOICES--JUST AHEAD!
THEN KEEP THAT GUN AT THE READY, MISTER!
COULD BE...THE VISION!
17


YOU ARE BEATEN, MURDERER!
HOW CAN YOU FIGHT ONE WHO CAN RAIN BLOWS UPON YOU--YET BECOME TOO UNSOLID TO BE PHYSICALLY STRUCK?
HAH! WHAT NEED HAVE I FOR BASE PHYSICAL COMBAT--
--WHEN I HAVE ULTIMATE CONTROL OVER EACH WONDROUS, WHIRLING ATOM OF MY BEING--?
--WHEN I MAY TRANSFORM MYSELF, IN ONE FEARFUL INSTANT--
--INTO SHEER IONIC FORCE --WHICH EVEN YOU MAY NOT ADJUST YOUR MOLECULES TO WITHSTAND--
--AND THEN BECOME ONCE MORE-- ULTRON-6!?
BUT NOW, I LEAVE YOU TO YOUR SHATTERED MUSINGS!
THEY, LIKE YOU, SHALL NOT LONG ENDURE!
18


WHO COULD HAVE DREAMED --THAT ULTRON NOW POSSESSED --SUCH INFINITE POWER?
YET, I MUST NOT FALL-- MUST NOT FALTER--!
FOR, WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT...
THE TIME DRAWS NEARER FOR THE FINAL HOLOCAUST!
WAIT! THOSE MEN--IN SHIELD REGALIA!
THEY HAVE SEEN ME--!
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, AVENGER!
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR SET-UP IS DOWN HERE...
BUT WE WANT THAT ADAMANTIUM --AND WE WANT IT NOW!!
YOU GOT THREE SECONDS, SYNTHO--
THEN, IT'S BLASTVILLE!
STOP! YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND--!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO DOESN'T SAVVY, ANDROID!
MAYBE YOU'RE GREAT SHAKES AT WALKING THRU WALLS --AND ATTACKING SHIELD AGENTS--
BUT, THIS VIBRO-GUN OUGHTTA MESS YOUR MOLECULES GOOD!
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
NNOoo
SZZR
AK
19


...A GREAT BATTLE HATH TAKEN PLACE HERE, MY FRIENDS!
PERCHANCE THE VISION IS NOT AS SURELY OUR ENEMY AS DID SEEM!
I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT, CURLY, BUT--
HEY-- WHAT'S THAT NUTTY HUMMING--
GETTIN' LOUDER-- LOUDER--!?
MMMMMMMMMN
BY ASGARD'S GOLDEN GATES!!
YET ANOTHER SEARING SHOCK WAVE--
MORE VIOLENT THAN THEY THAT WENT BEFORE!
AND-- THAT'S NOT ALL, THUNDER GOD!
LOOK!
THE METALLIC DEBRIS-- DISINTEGRATING!
ITS VERY ESSENCE IS HURLED FROM MATTER--INTO ENERGY!
BUT-- WHAT'S IT ALL MEAN?
CAN'T YOU SEE? THE CHAIN REACTION HAS BEGUN!
ULTRON-6 HAS BUT TO PULL ONE LAST SWITCH--
--TO WIPE A CITY OFF THE FACE OF THE MAP!!
NEXT: THE FINAL GAMBIT!

Sal Buscema replaced Windsor-Smith after this issue. In issue #68, Thor saves the city from the exploding Ultron by containing him within a Vibranium shield.



AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP, SECOND FLOOR, 625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Dear Stan and Roy:

In the past two or three years, I have been content to let Marvel struggle with the problem of rendering superheroes attractive to serious audiences in its own way. However, the steady decline of Marvel over the past two years, combined with the forthcoming demise of one of my favorite characters, Goliath, has at last convinced me that what I have to say is important enough to be worth the trouble.

So far, most of the characters and situations in your comics show an admirable understanding on your part of one of the crucial problems of superheroes: they must be both unique and common; that is, they must needs be repetitions of other superheroes, but they must have enough average humanity to be sympathetic characters, characters with whom readers can identify. Giving credit where credit is due, I should say that, in the area of uniqueness, you have not been remiss—whatever else has happened to Marvel, you have not lost your ability to come up with new ideas, imaginative characters, interesting situations. Where you break down is in what you do with those ideas, characters, and situations. I feel that you are attacking the problem of making your heroes believable in a way that is different from, and inferior to, the way you have attacked the problem in the past. . . .

My identification with Goliath has been relatively positive. I know that he is rather unintelligent, quick-tempered, crude in a way—but I liked him equally in his Hawkeye days, because he has been the faithful Avenger over the years, because he alone of all the Avengers has convinced me that he will never surrender to what he knows is evil. He's not perfect, I'm not perfect; but he has the qualities of a hero, qualities that I can wish I had, and so I identify with him.

Which brings me back to the subject of "decline." Let me try to show you what I mean. The old Goliath was a lousy character. Here's why: he had too much going for him—super-brains, huge strength, and a completely faithful woman. You must have seen how lousy he was, because you tried to spice him up by giving him a "problem"—he kept getting stuck at odd sizes. That was one of the least human problems you ever invented, and in the long run it failed (witness his steady loss of popularity). But—there was a brief while when the old Goliath was the most exciting character around. In epic struggles against Dragon-Man, Hercules (a case of mistaken loyalties), and the Super-Adaptoid (AVENGERS #38, 41, 45), he fought harder, showed more determination, and paid a higher price for victory than any other Avenger. For a brief while, he excelled in grit. Now, compare your treatment of the new Goliath. In AVENGERS #41, where Hank Pym is defeated by Dragon-Man, the heroic struggle lasted for SIX pages of dramatic action. Now, the new Goliath has "saved the day" twice in the last year; in #75, he was victorious against Arkon in 3 frames occupying only a third of a page; in #86, he beat Brain-Child in 6 frames occupying two-thirds of a page. In all his other action, he has been either defeated immediately, with no struggle, or made a fool of. Is it any wonder that he has become unpopular enough for you to get rid of him? You have totally failed to realize his potential. He is a true fighter; he will never give up—but you, I am sure, will get rid of him, in favor of Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch, who are two of the dullest characters you have ever created.

Well, I suppose that I could let one character with a lot of courage and a strict sense of duty and justice leave without complaining at such length. But I see that Goliath is a typical case in Marvel today. In two years, you have presented only one sympathetic, heroic desperate battle to the world: The Fantastic Four against the Overmind (well, maybe Thor's fight against the World Beyond counts). Particularly hard hit have been your teams, especially the Avengers. When are you going to realize that the details of an awful struggle, won (eventually) the hard way, are what bring readers back to the stories of superheroes? True Confessions I can get somewhere else. Give me a hero that I can sympathize with and respect.

Stephen R. Donaldson, 320 E. Erie St.
Kent, Ohio 44240

We'll try, Steve. Naturally, we can't be expected to agree with most of the points raised concerning a supposed "decline" in Marvel over the past couple of years, but some of your arguments are doubtless well-taken—and some of them are problems we ourselves have been wrestling with off and on. As a matter of fact, it's because we feel the same way about certain things that Hawkeye returned in the last two pages of the very issue of AVENGERS you now hold in your hands—and Roy and Barry are hoping to do more with our awesome assemblers (especially Hawkeye, the Vision, and the mutant siblings Pietro and Wanda) than even you could possibly wish for. It'll all take a bit of time, though, since we've got well over a half dozen heroes to inject into each and every story—so bear with us a wee bit longer, huh? We'll be in there trying—honest!

Dear Stan, Roy, and Neal,

AVENGERS #93, 94 and 95 were really great! I have always been partial to the long involved type of plot which Marvel does so well, and when it's combined with Adams' art, it can't be beat.

Lots of questions have been answered during the course of this series, and it should go down in comics' history as the best continued plot-line in the last ten years. I hope that there is a sufficient amount of time taken to wind it up, since the Avengers will have to take up the gauntlet thrown down by both the Kree and the Skrull empires, which is quite an undertaking.

Michael P. Higgins, 17 Summit St.
Yonkers, N.Y. 10701

So it was, Mike. And that's precisely why the entire Skrull/Kree mishmash lasted a titanic total of nine issues of THE AVENGERS (if you count the three more-or-less exclusively Kree-oriented tales from #89-91). Somehow, though, we've got an educated hunch we'll be getting mail on that little many-faceted epic for months to come, so we'll dwell on something else for now, if we may.

Namely, as you yourself know (though other Marvelites could not), the above two paragraphs were taken from a long, long letter of yours which dealt, section by section, with each and every one of our mags. We'd like to request that you and other readers who wish to comment on a number of different issues do so, in the future, by using a different letter (or at least sheet of paper) for each comic-mag addressed. Sure, you can put 'em all in the same envelope—we don't get a kickback from the Postal Service—but at least that way our busy Gal Friday will be able to figure out where to file each letter (under AVENGERS? HULK? SPIDEY? Other?). After all, we wouldn't want your cogent comments to end up on the comic-book equivalent of the cutting-room floor, just because we don't know quite where to put it.

Yep, we still try to keep our promise to read (if not necessarily answer) each piece of mail that crosses our desk—and we're not trying to cop out on that promise now—but we need all the help we can get from you frantic ones. Clear 'nuff?

Dear Stan, Roy, and Neal,

I've finally found a mistake worth a coveted No-Prize, I hope!

In AVENGERS #93, when Ant-Man was inside the Vision, he noticed that the bubbles which make the android intangible (and Mr. Pym, too) did not affect the Vision's antibodies (as shown on page 14).

If this is so, then whenver the Vision passes through a wall, he would leave behind his antibodies (which shouldn't happen in a respectable comic mag such as yours).

Although this is a serious offense, you will be graciously forgiven if you print this letter and send me a No-Prize.

Mark Stephens, Penna. Ave.
Apalachin, NY 13732

It's being sent even as we speak (or don't speak, as the case may be).

We've got to admit, though, that we sorta figured the antibodies did indeed become intangible so far as any foreign substance (such as a wall which the Vision must try to pass thru) was concerned, and that it was merely as regards those bubbles themselves that they remained tangible. As a matter of fact, that must be more or less what happens—or else our android Avenger would end up stuck midway thru an awful lot of picket fences and brick walls! Right, Mark?

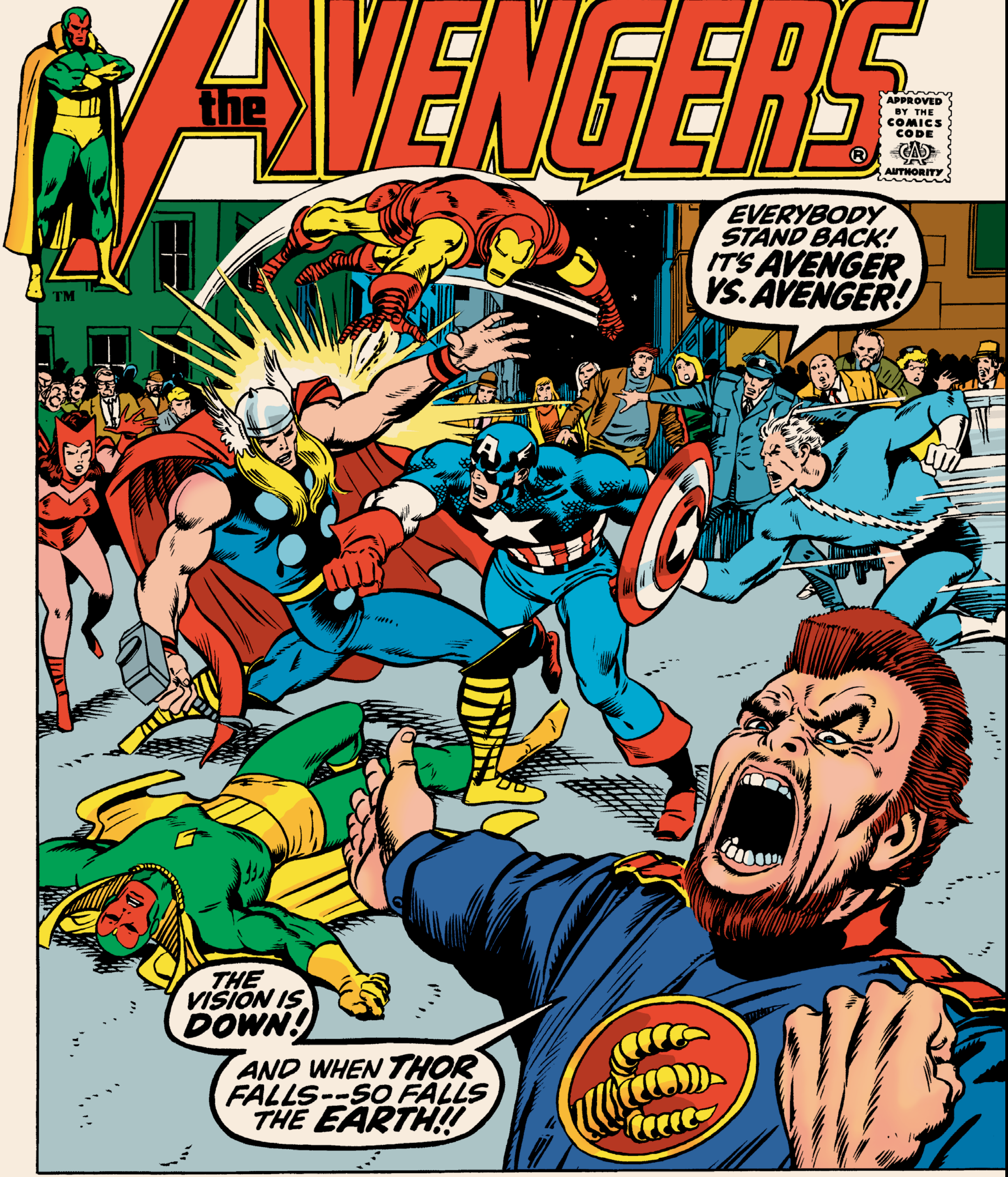
AVENGERS MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

20¢ CC 98 APR 02458

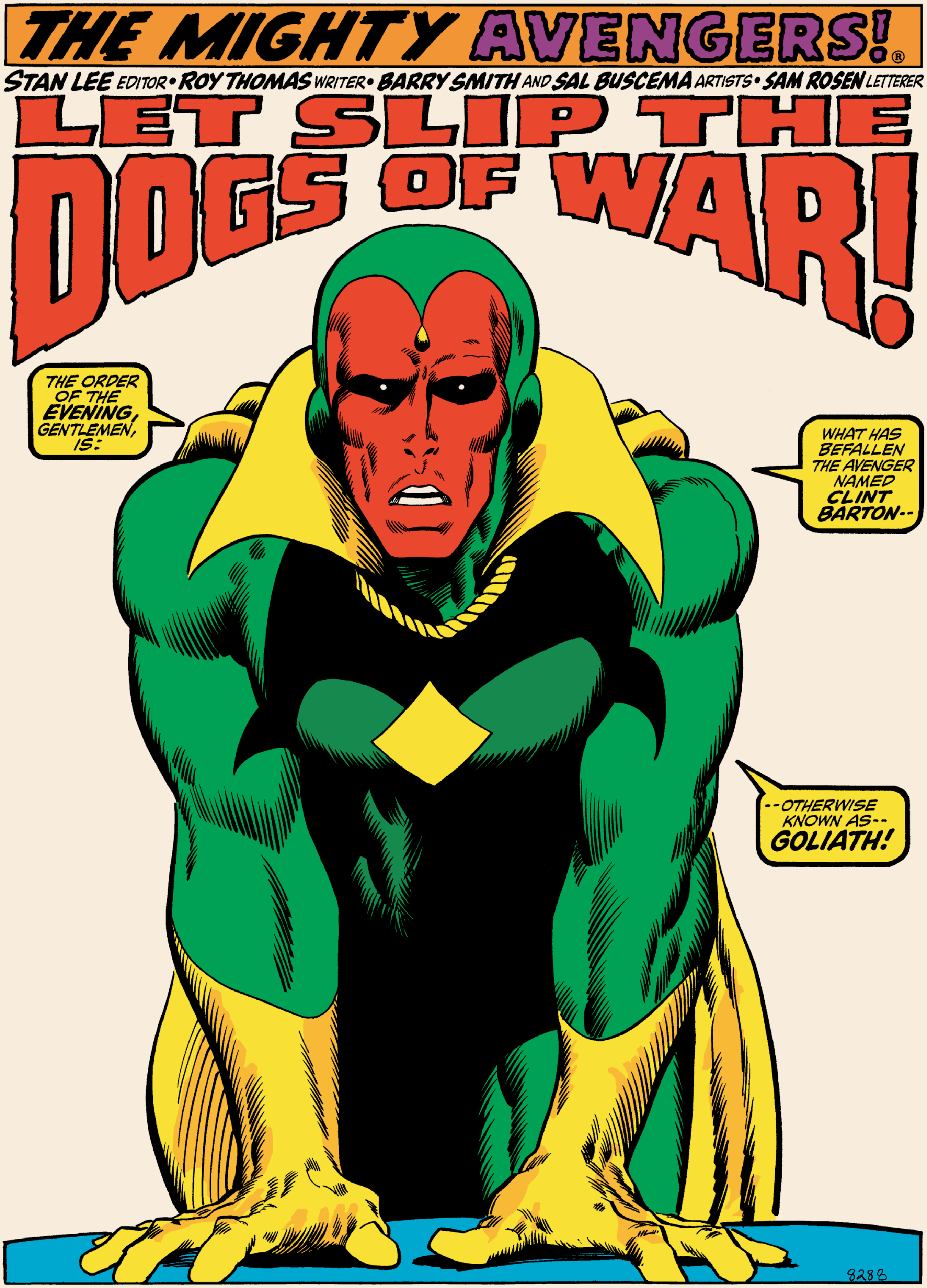
THOR! CAPTAIN AMERICA! IRON MAN!

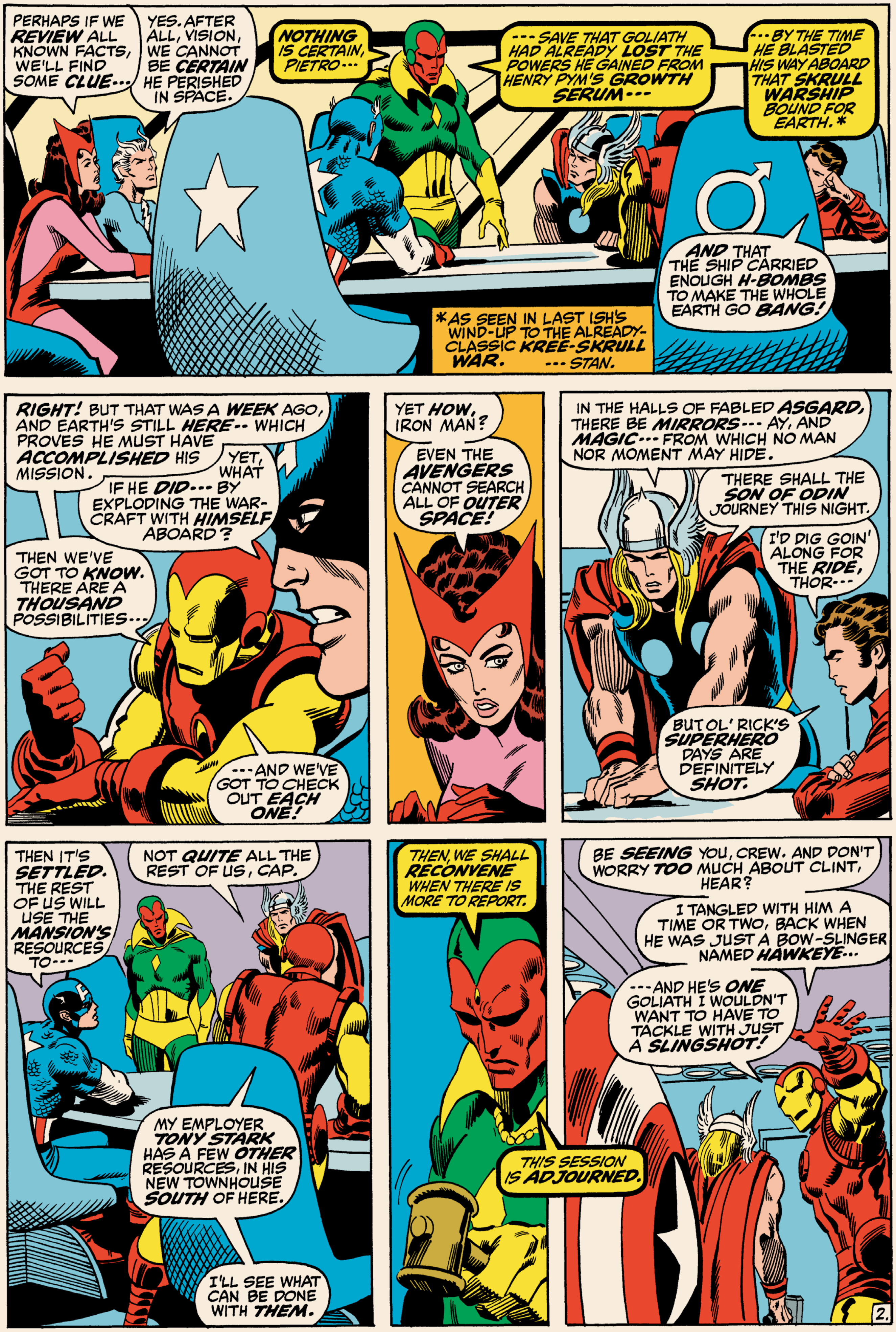
the AVENGERS®

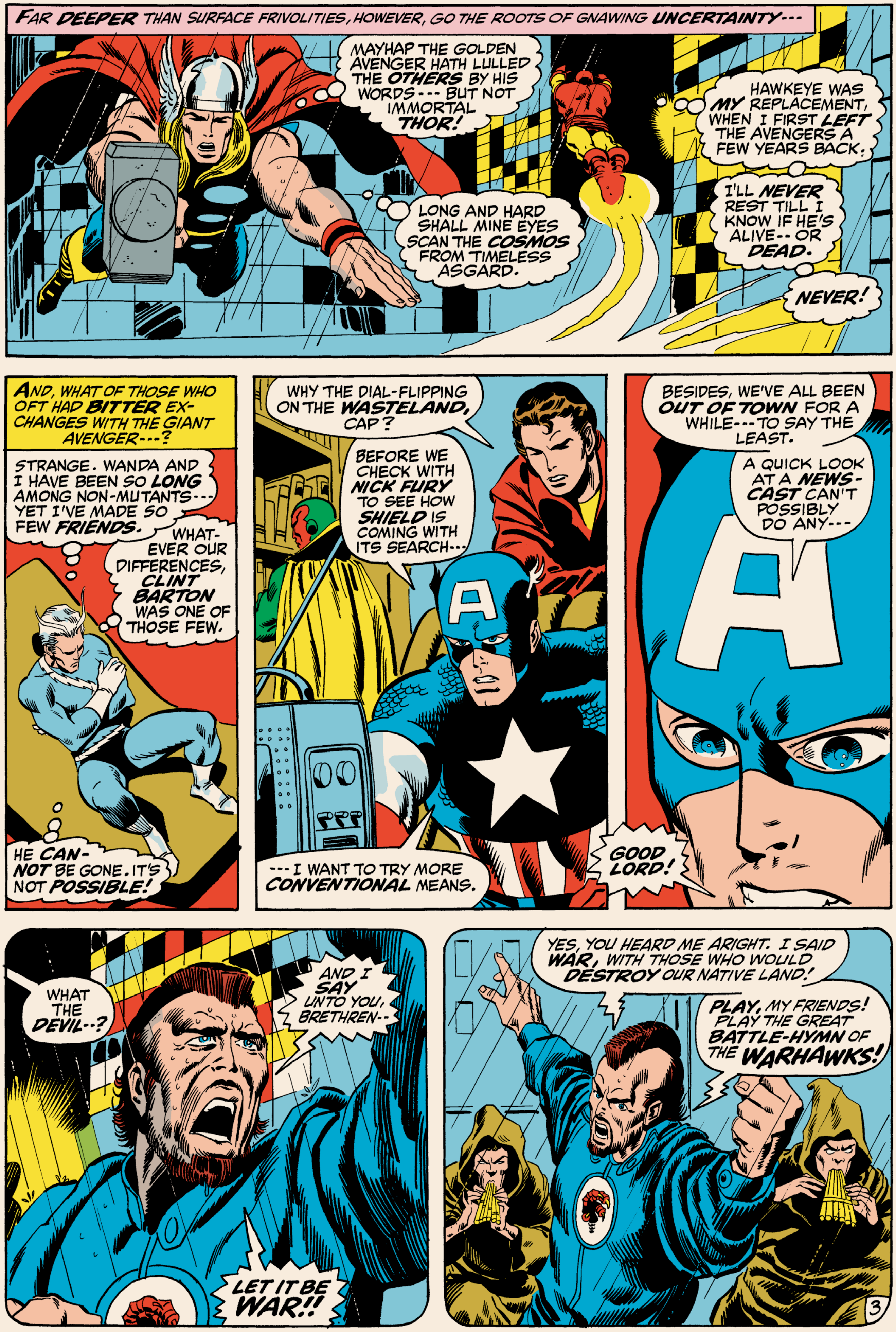
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY

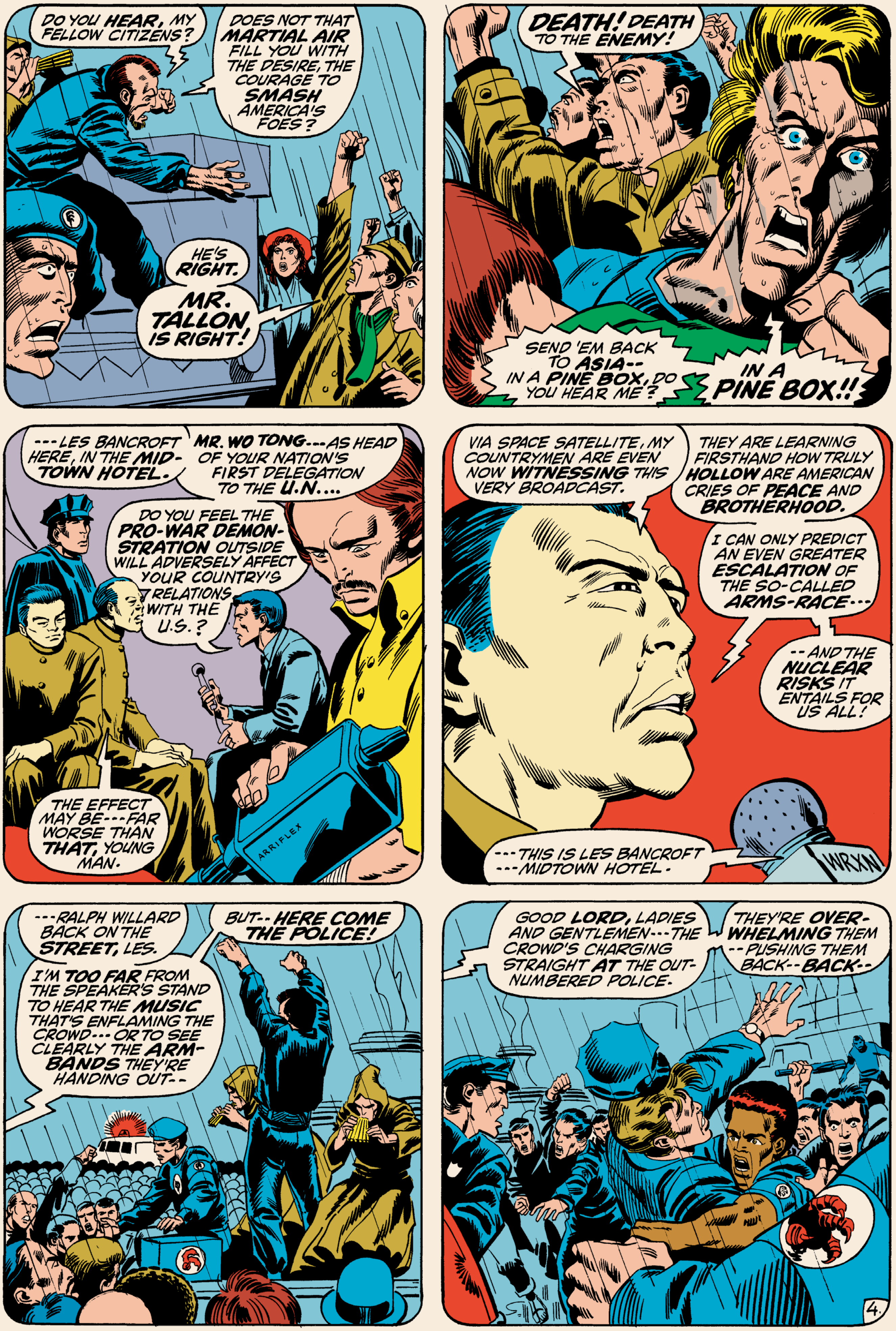

TM
EVERYBODY STAND BACK! IT'S AVENGER VS. AVENGER!
THE VISION IS DOWN!
AND WHEN THOR FALLS--SO FALLS THE EARTH!!

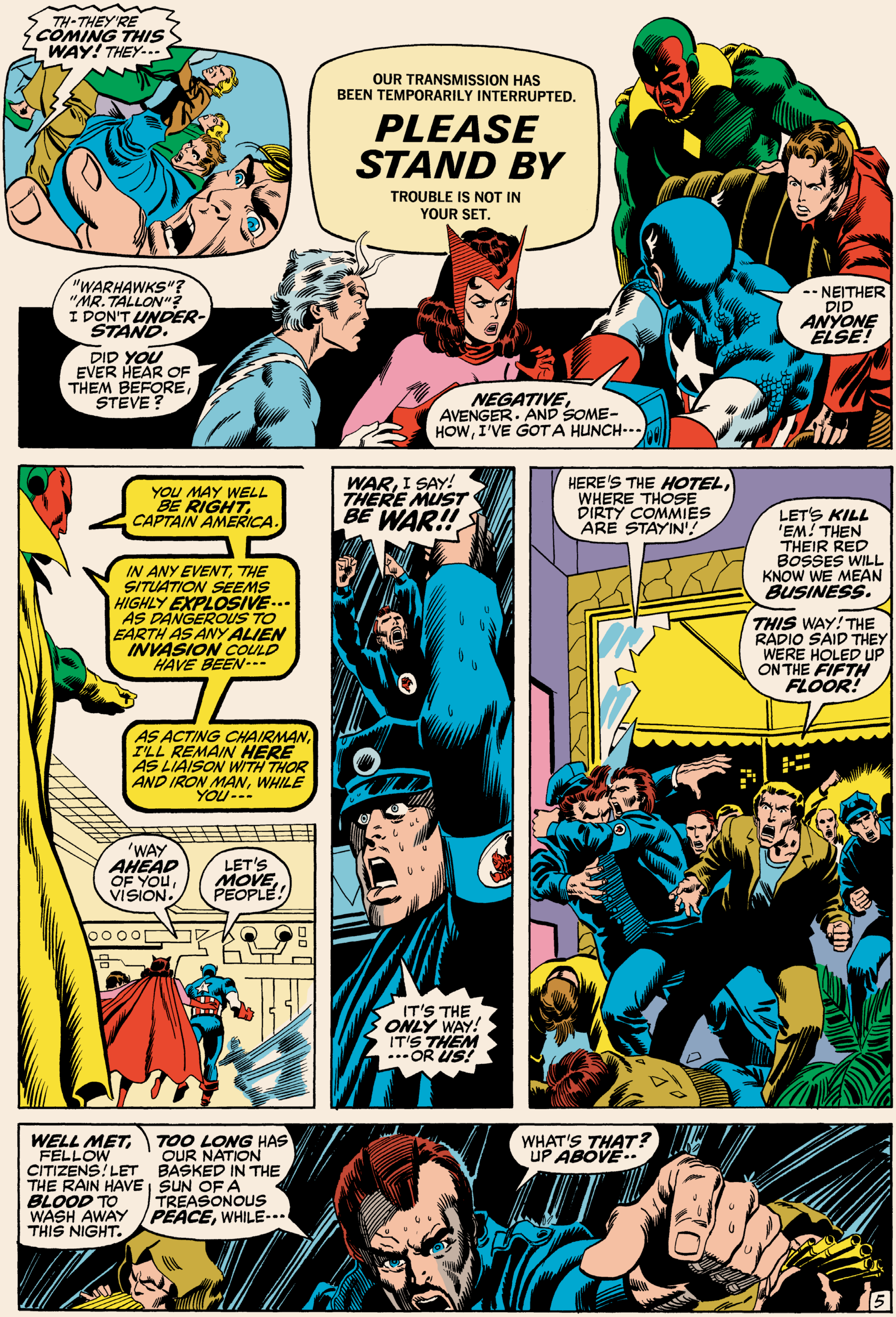
THE COMING OF WAR-HAWK!

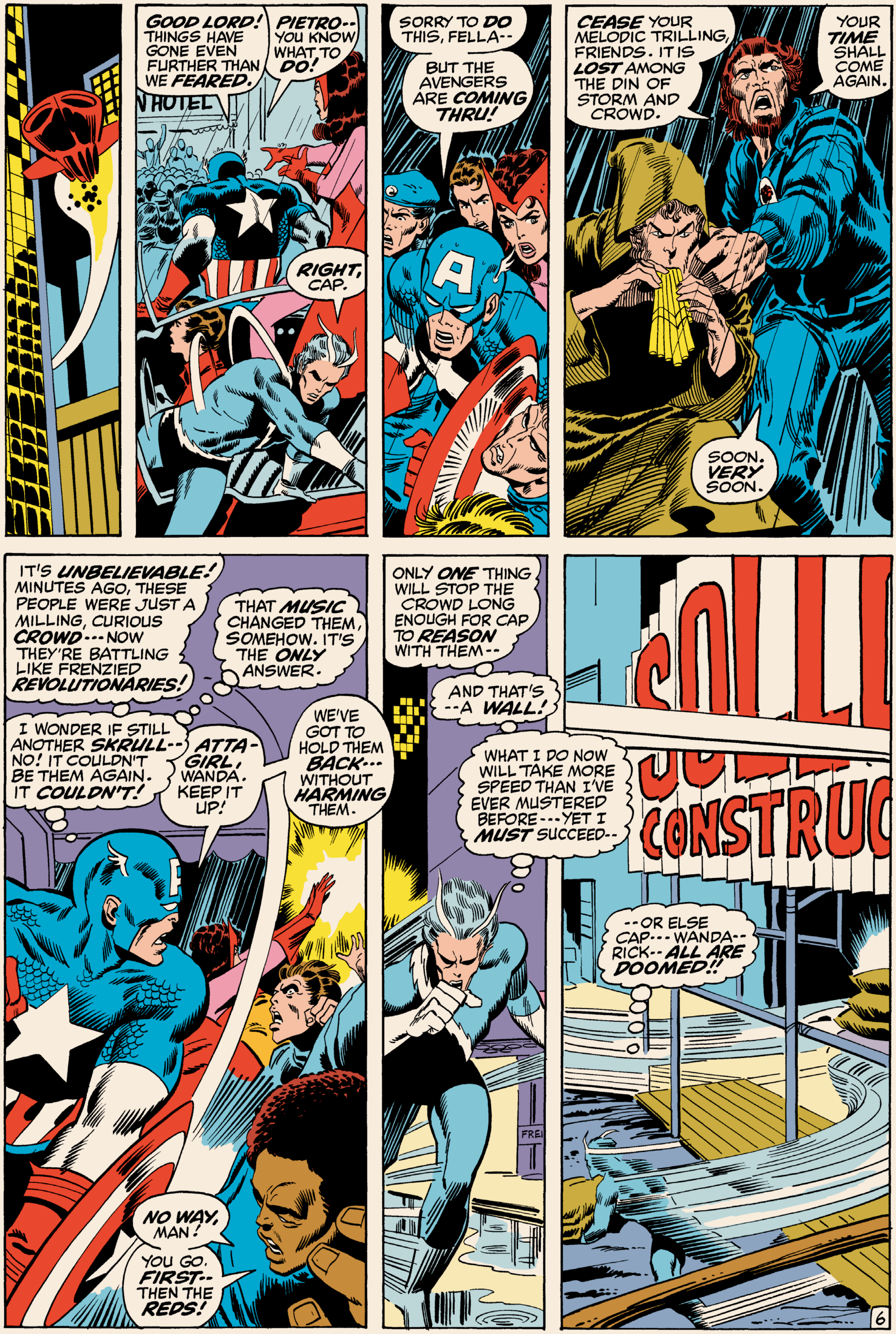

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • BARRY SMITH AND SAL BUSCEMA ARTISTS • SAM ROSEN LETTERER
LET SLIP THE DOGS OF WAR!
THE ORDER OF THE EVENING, GENTLEMEN, IS:
WHAT HAS BEFALLEN THE AVENGER NAMED CLINT BARTON--
--OTHERWISE KNOWN AS-- GOLIATH!
8288

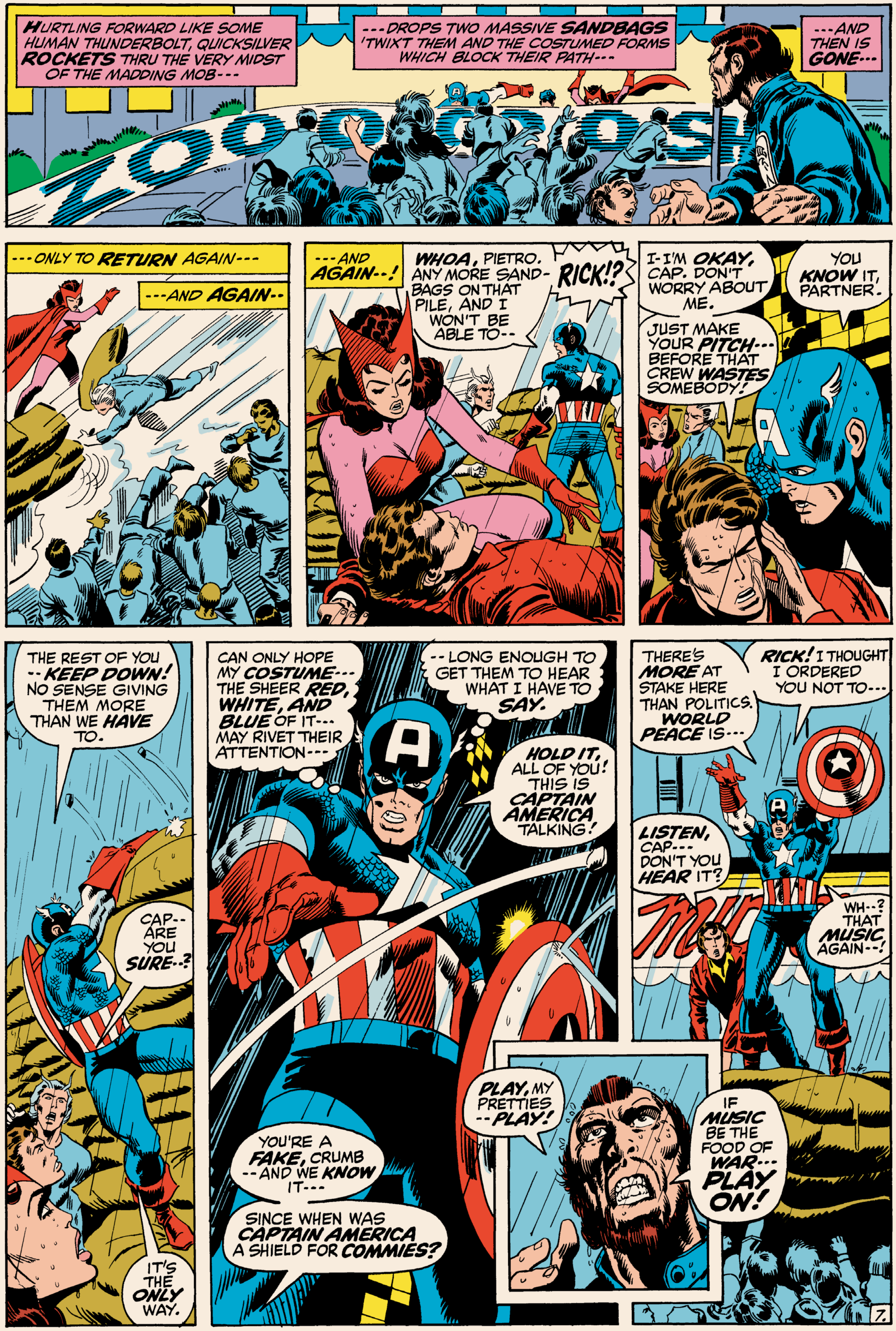

PERHAPS IF WE **REVIEW** ALL KNOWN FACTS, WE'LL FIND SOME **CLUE**...
YES. AFTER ALL, VISION, WE CANNOT BE **CERTAIN** HE PERISHED IN SPACE.
NOTHING IS CERTAIN, PIETRO---
---SAVE THAT GOLIATH HAD ALREADY **LOST** THE POWERS HE GAINED FROM HENRY PYM'S **GROWTH SERUM**---
---BY THE TIME HE BLASTED HIS WAY ABOARD THAT **SKRULL WARSHIP** BOUND FOR EARTH.*
AND THAT THE SHIP CARRIED ENOUGH **H-BOMBS** TO MAKE THE WHOLE EARTH GO **BANG!**
*AS SEEN IN LAST ISH'S WIND-UP TO THE ALREADY-CLASSIC **KREE-SKRULL WAR.** ---STAN.
RIGHT! BUT THAT WAS A **WEEK** AGO, AND EARTH'S STILL **HERE**-- WHICH PROVES HE MUST HAVE **ACCOMPLISHED** HIS MISSION.
YET, WHAT IF HE **DID**--- BY EXPLODING THE WAR-CRAFT WITH **HIMSELF** ABOARD?
THEN WE'VE GOT TO **KNOW.** THERE ARE A **THOUSAND** POSSIBILITIES---
---AND WE'VE GOT TO CHECK OUT **EACH ONE!**
YET **HOW,** IRON MAN?
EVEN THE **AVENGERS** CANNOT SEARCH ALL OF **OUTER SPACE!**
IN THE HALLS OF FABLED **ASGARD,** THERE BE **MIRRORS**--- AY, AND **MAGIC**--- FROM WHICH NO MAN NOR MOMENT MAY HIDE.
THERE SHALL THE **SON OF ODIN** JOURNEY THIS NIGHT.
I'D DIG GOIN' ALONG FOR THE **RIDE,** THOR---
BUT OL' RICK'S **SUPERHERO** DAYS ARE DEFINITELY **SHOT.**
THEN IT'S **SETTLED.** THE REST OF US WILL USE THE **MANSION'S** RESOURCES TO---
NOT **QUITE** ALL THE REST OF US, CAP.
MY EMPLOYER **TONY STARK** HAS A FEW **OTHER** RESOURCES, IN HIS NEW TOWNHOUSE **SOUTH** OF HERE.
I'LL SEE WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH **THEM.**
THEN, WE SHALL **RECONVENE** WHEN THERE IS MORE TO REPORT.
THIS SESSION IS **ADJOURNED.**
BE **SEEING** YOU, CREW. AND DON'T WORRY **TOO** MUCH ABOUT CLINT, HEAR?
I TANGLED WITH HIM A TIME OR TWO, BACK WHEN HE WAS JUST A BOW-SLINGER NAMED **HAWKEYE**...
---AND HE'S **ONE** GOLIATH I WOULDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO TACKLE WITH JUST A **SLINGSHOT!**
2.

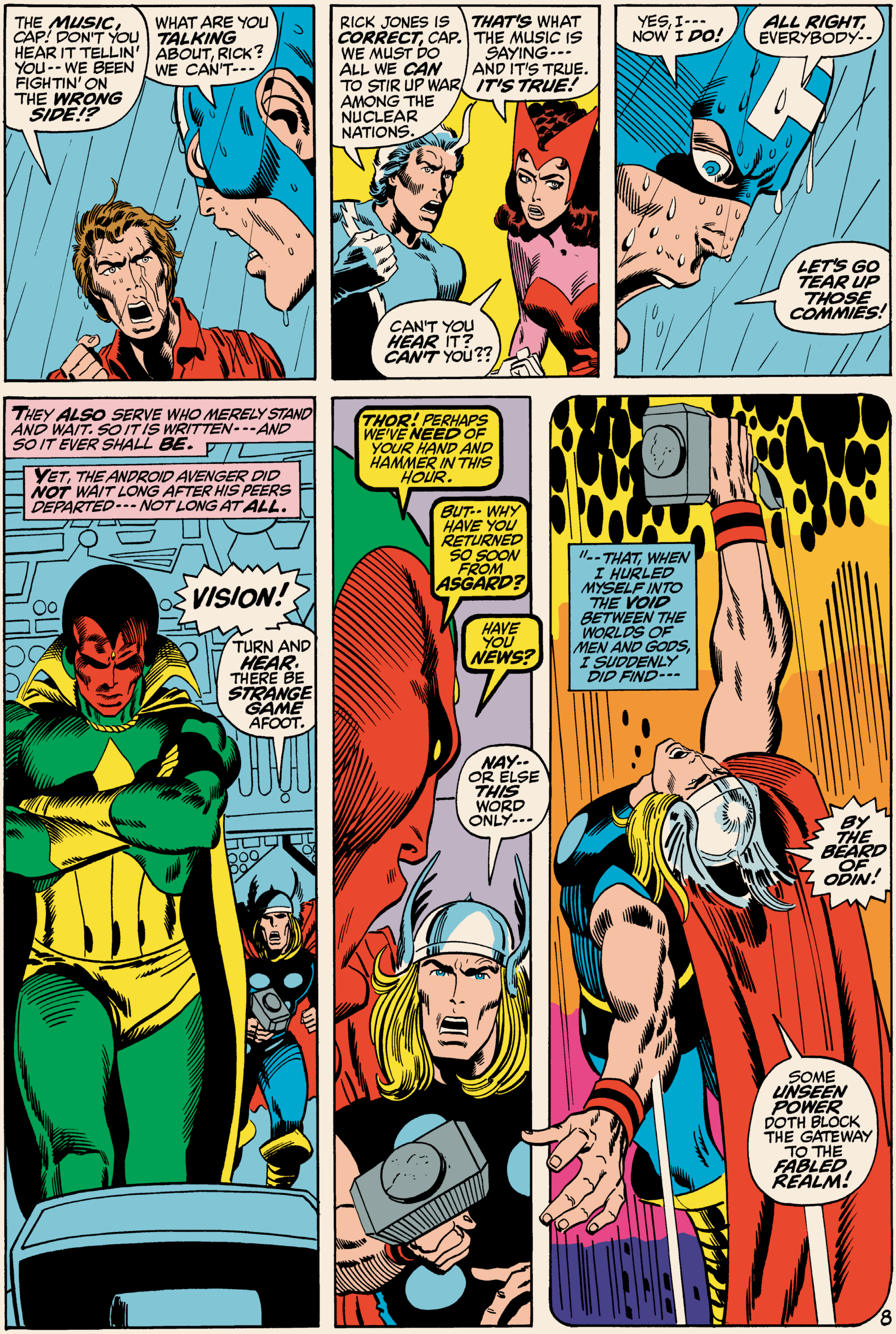

FAR DEEPER THAN SURFACE FRIVOLITIES, HOWEVER, GO THE ROOTS OF GNAWING UNCERTAINTY---
MAYHAP THE GOLDEN AVENGER HATH LULLED THE OTHERS BY HIS WORDS--- BUT NOT IMMORTAL THOR!
LONG AND HARD SHALL MINE EYES SCAN THE COSMOS FROM TIMELESS ASGARD.
HAWKEYE WAS MY REPLACEMENT, WHEN I FIRST LEFT THE AVENGERS A FEW YEARS BACK.
I'LL NEVER REST TILL I KNOW IF HE'S ALIVE-- OR DEAD.
NEVER!
AND, WHAT OF THOSE WHO OFT HAD BITTER EXCHANGES WITH THE GIANT AVENGER---?
STRANGE. WANDA AND I HAVE BEEN SO LONG AMONG NON-MUTANTS--- YET I'VE MADE SO FEW FRIENDS.
WHATEVER OUR DIFFERENCES, CLINT BARTON WAS ONE OF THOSE FEW.
HE CANNOT BE GONE. IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
WHY THE DIAL-FLIPPING ON THE WASTELAND, CAP?
BEFORE WE CHECK WITH NICK FURY TO SEE HOW SHIELD IS COMING WITH ITS SEARCH---
--- I WANT TO TRY MORE CONVENTIONAL MEANS.
BESIDES, WE'VE ALL BEEN OUT OF TOWN FOR A WHILE--- TO SAY THE LEAST.
A QUICK LOOK AT A NEWSCAST CAN'T POSSIBLY DO ANY---
GOOD LORD!
WHAT THE DEVIL--?
AND I SAY UNTO YOU, BRETHREN--
LET IT BE WAR!!
YES, YOU HEARD ME ARIGHT. I SAID WAR, WITH THOSE WHO WOULD DESTROY OUR NATIVE LAND!
PLAY, MY FRIENDS! PLAY THE GREAT BATTLE-HYMN OF THE WARHAWKS!
3

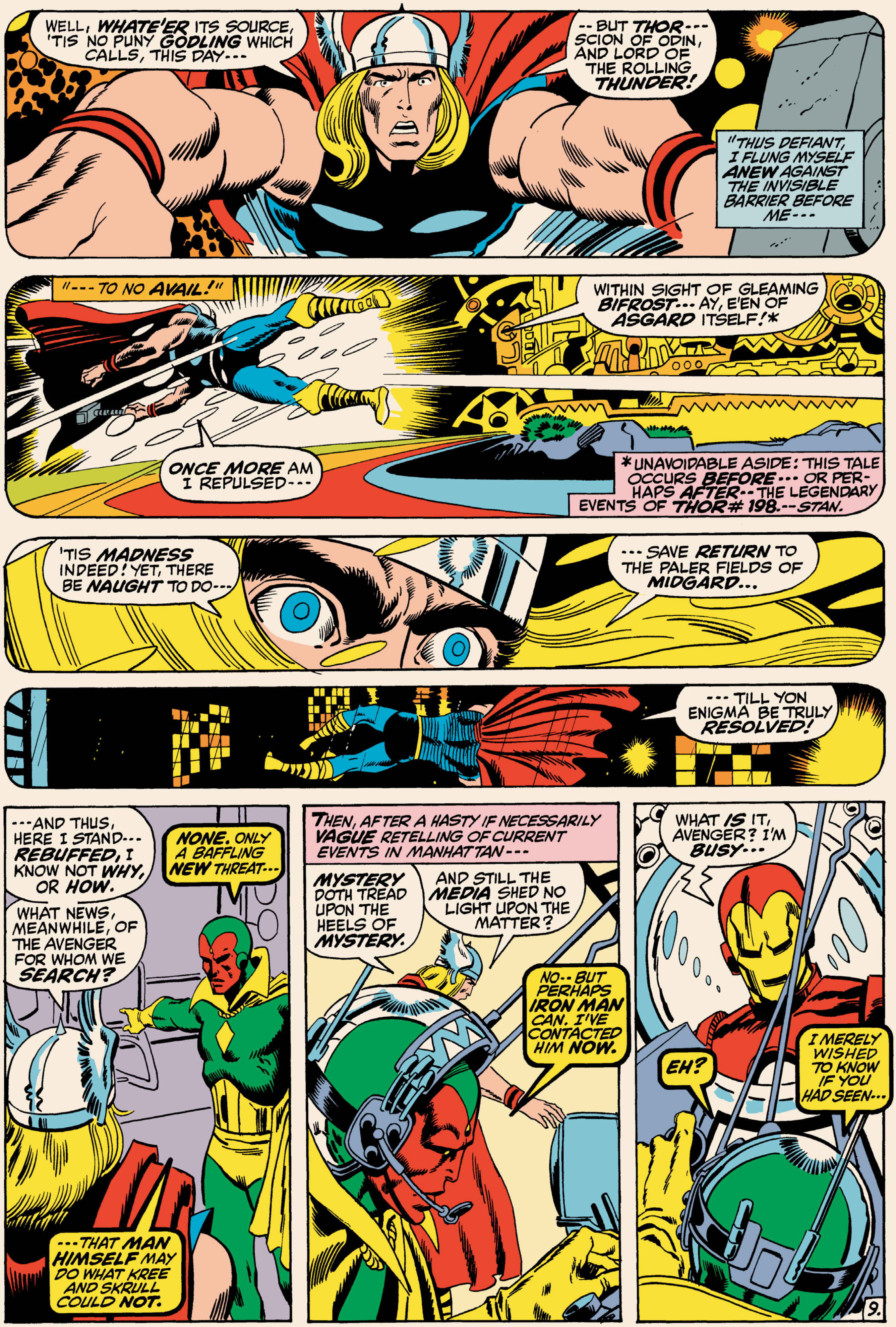

DO YOU **HEAR,** MY FELLOW CITIZENS?
DOES NOT THAT **MARTIAL AIR** FILL YOU WITH THE DESIRE, THE COURAGE TO **SMASH** AMERICA'S FOES?
HE'S **RIGHT.**
MR. TALLON IS RIGHT!
DEATH! DEATH TO THE **ENEMY!**
SEND 'EM BACK TO **ASIA**-- IN A **PINE BOX,** DO YOU HEAR ME?
IN A PINE BOX!!
---LES BANCROFT HERE, IN THE **MID-TOWN HOTEL.**
MR. WO TONG---AS HEAD OF YOUR NATION'S FIRST DELEGATION TO THE **U.N....**
DO YOU FEEL THE **PRO-WAR DEMONSTRATION** OUTSIDE WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT YOUR COUNTRY'S RELATIONS WITH THE U.S.?
THE EFFECT MAY BE---FAR WORSE THAN **THAT,** YOUNG MAN.
ARRIFLEX
VIA SPACE SATELLITE, MY COUNTRYMEN ARE EVEN NOW **WITNESSING** THIS VERY BROADCAST.
THEY ARE LEARNING FIRSTHAND HOW TRULY **HOLLOW** ARE AMERICAN CRIES OF **PEACE** AND **BROTHERHOOD.**
I CAN ONLY PREDICT AN EVEN GREATER **ESCALATION** OF THE SO-CALLED **ARMS-RACE**---
--AND THE **NUCLEAR RISKS** IT ENTAILS FOR US ALL!
---THIS IS LES BANCROFT ---MIDTOWN HOTEL.
WRXN
---RALPH WILLARD BACK ON THE **STREET,** LES.
I'M **TOO FAR** FROM THE SPEAKER'S STAND TO HEAR THE **MUSIC** THAT'S ENFLAMING THE CROWD---OR TO SEE CLEARLY THE **ARM-BANDS** THEY'RE HANDING OUT--
BUT--**HERE COME THE POLICE!**
GOOD **LORD,** LADIES AND GENTLEMEN---THE CROWD'S CHARGING STRAIGHT **AT** THE OUT-NUMBERED POLICE.
THEY'RE **OVER-WHELMING** THEM --PUSHING THEM BACK--**BACK**--
4.

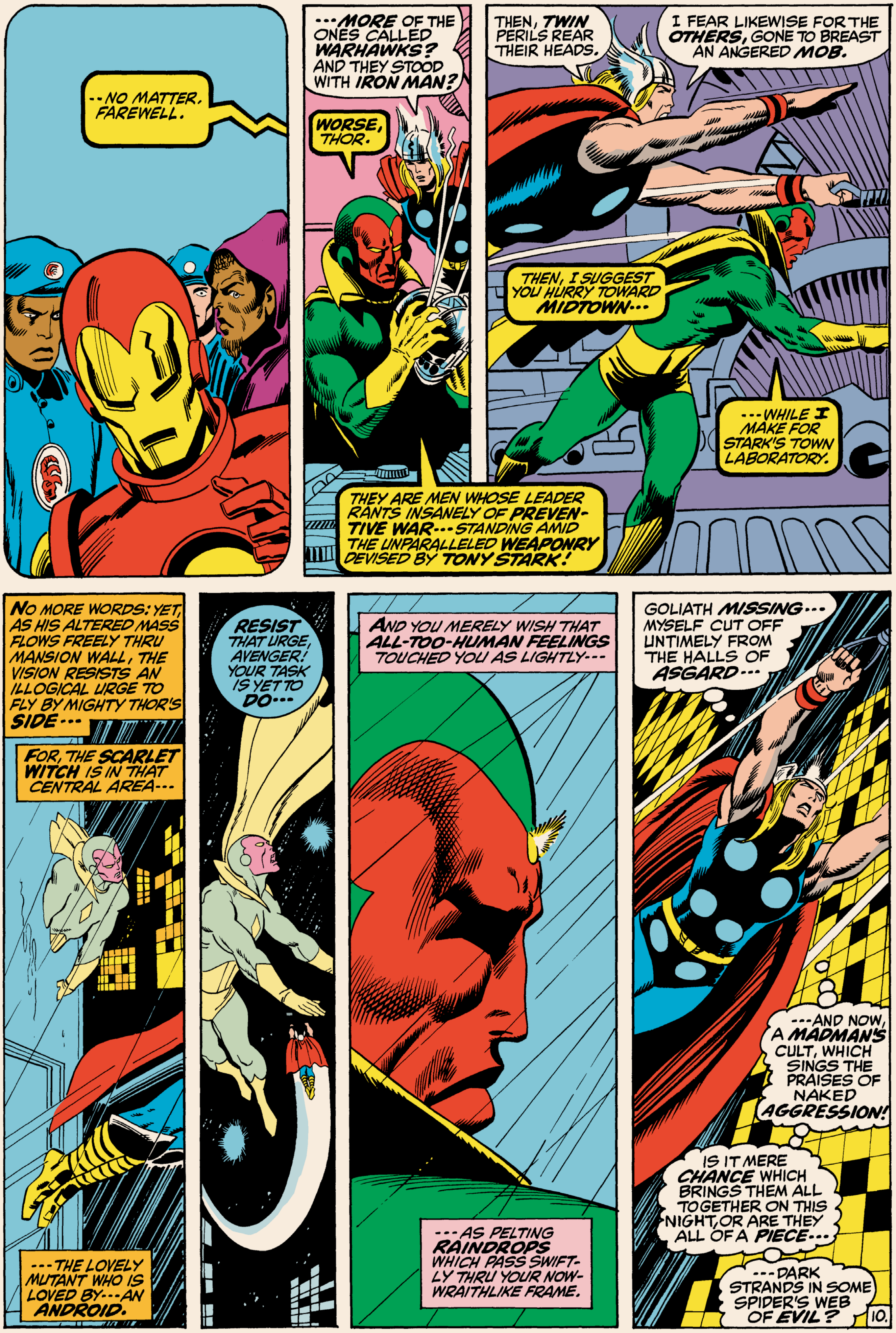

TH-THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY! THEY---
OUR TRANSMISSION HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY INTERRUPTED. PLEASE STAND BY TROUBLE IS NOT IN YOUR SET.
"WARHAWKS"? "MR. TALLON"? I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
DID YOU EVER HEAR OF THEM BEFORE, STEVE?
NEGATIVE, AVENGER. AND SOMEHOW, I'VE GOT A HUNCH---
--NEITHER DID ANYONE ELSE!
YOU MAY WELL BE RIGHT, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
IN ANY EVENT, THE SITUATION SEEMS HIGHLY EXPLOSIVE--- AS DANGEROUS TO EARTH AS ANY ALIEN INVASION COULD HAVE BEEN---
AS ACTING CHAIRMAN, I'LL REMAIN HERE AS LIAISON WITH THOR AND IRON MAN, WHILE YOU---
'WAY AHEAD OF YOU, VISION.
LET'S MOVE, PEOPLE!
WAR, I SAY! THERE MUST BE WAR!!
IT'S THE ONLY WAY! IT'S THEM ---OR US!
HERE'S THE HOTEL, WHERE THOSE DIRTY COMMIES ARE STAYIN'!
LET'S KILL 'EM! THEN THEIR RED BOSSES WILL KNOW WE MEAN BUSINESS.
THIS WAY! THE RADIO SAID THEY WERE HOLED UP ON THE FIFTH FLOOR!
WELL MET, FELLOW CITIZENS! LET THE RAIN HAVE BLOOD TO WASH AWAY THIS NIGHT.
TOO LONG HAS OUR NATION BASKED IN THE SUN OF A TREASONOUS PEACE, WHILE---
WHAT'S THAT? UP ABOVE--
5

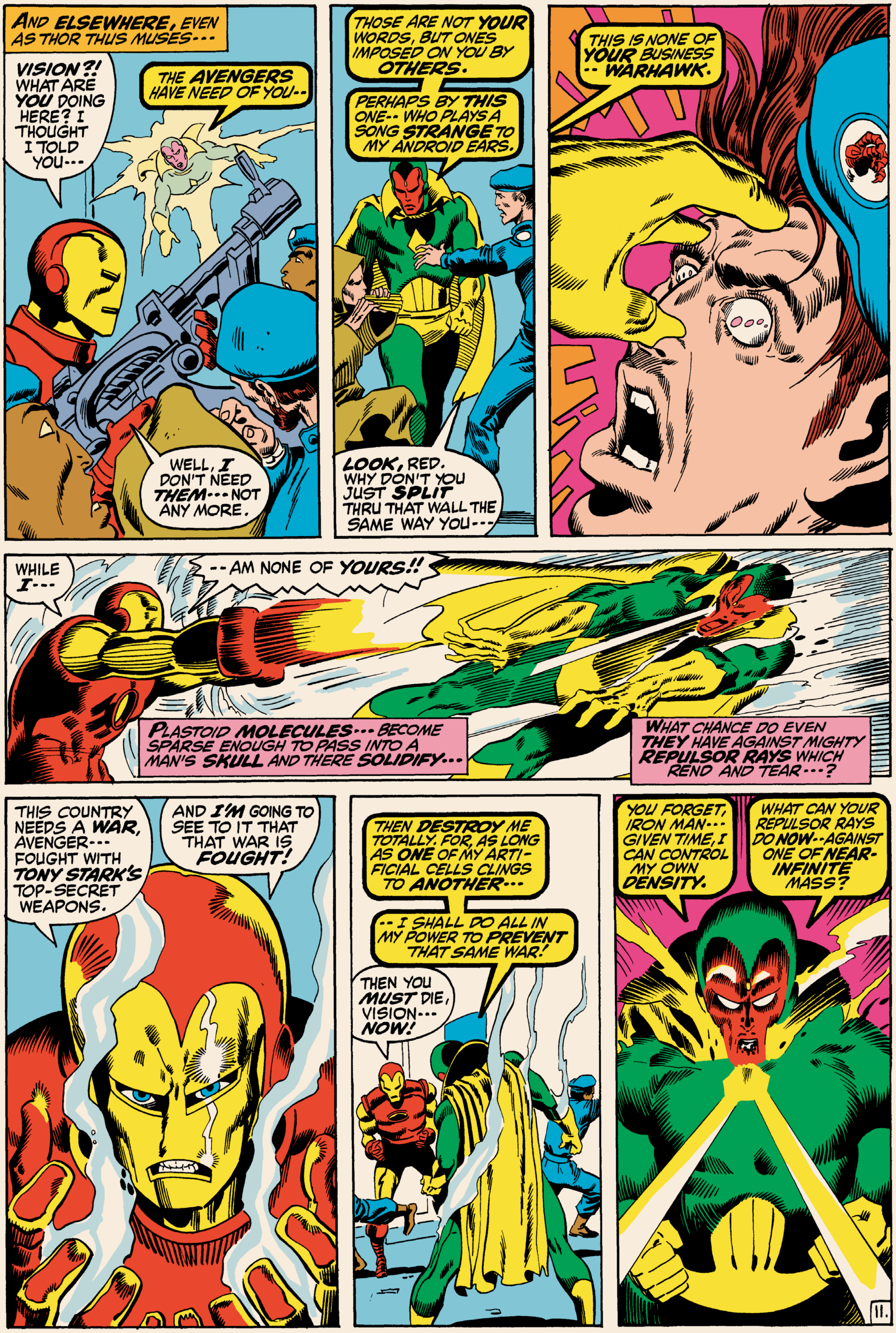

N HOTEL
GOOD LORD! THINGS HAVE GONE EVEN FURTHER THAN WE FEARED.
PIETRO-- YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!
RIGHT, CAP.
SORRY TO DO THIS, FELLA--
BUT THE AVENGERS ARE COMING THRU!
CEASE YOUR MELODIC TRILLING, FRIENDS. IT IS LOST AMONG THE DIN OF STORM AND CROWD.
YOUR TIME SHALL COME AGAIN.
SOON. VERY SOON.
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! MINUTES AGO, THESE PEOPLE WERE JUST A MILLING, CURIOUS CROWD---NOW THEY'RE BATTLING LIKE FRENZIED REVOLUTIONARIES!
THAT MUSIC CHANGED THEM, SOMEHOW. IT'S THE ONLY ANSWER.
I WONDER IF STILL ANOTHER SKRULL-- NO! IT COULDN'T BE THEM AGAIN. IT COULDN'T!
ATTA-GIRL, WANDA. KEEP IT UP!
WE'VE GOT TO HOLD THEM BACK--- WITHOUT HARMING THEM.
NO WAY, MAN!
YOU GO. FIRST-- THEN THE REDS!
ONLY ONE THING WILL STOP THE CROWD LONG ENOUGH FOR CAP TO REASON WITH THEM--
AND THAT'S --A WALL!
WHAT I DO NOW WILL TAKE MORE SPEED THAN I'VE EVER MUSTERED BEFORE---YET I MUST SUCCEED--
FREI
CONSTRUC
--OR ELSE CAP--- WANDA-- RICK-- ALL ARE DOOMED!!
6

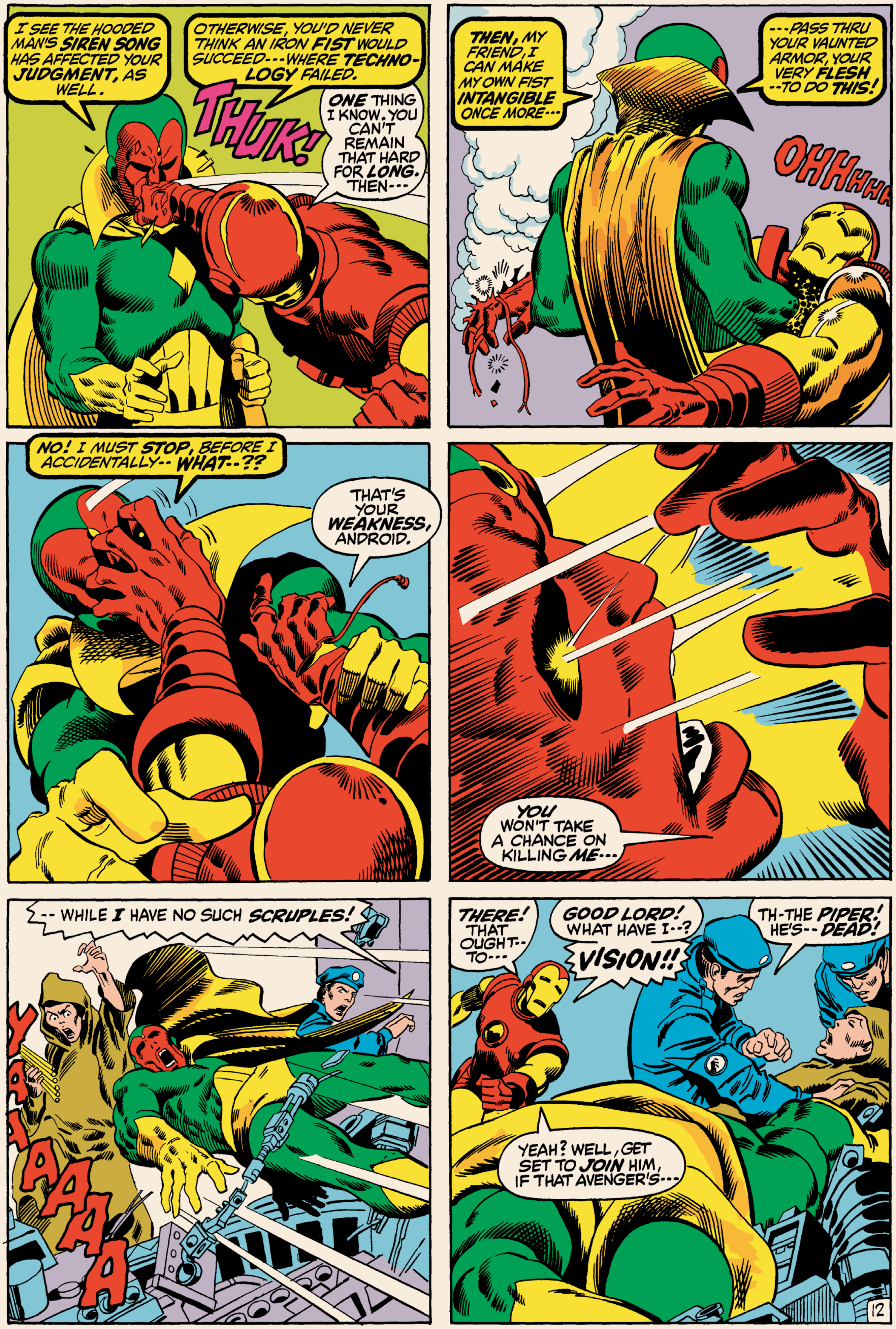

HURTLING FORWARD LIKE SOME HUMAN THUNDERBOLT, QUICKSILVER ROCKETS THRU THE VERY MIDST OF THE MADDING MOB---
---DROPS TWO MASSIVE SANDBAGS 'TWIXT THEM AND THE COSTUMED FORMS WHICH BLOCK THEIR PATH---
---AND THEN IS GONE---
ZOOOOOSH
---ONLY TO RETURN AGAIN---
---AND AGAIN--
---AND AGAIN--!
WHOA, PIETRO. ANY MORE SAND-BAGS ON THAT PILE, AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO--
RICK!?
I-I'M OKAY, CAP. DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
YOU KNOW IT, PARTNER.
JUST MAKE YOUR PITCH--- BEFORE THAT CREW WASTES SOMEBODY!
THE REST OF YOU --KEEP DOWN! NO SENSE GIVING THEM MORE THAN WE HAVE TO.
CAP-- ARE YOU SURE--?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY.
CAN ONLY HOPE MY COSTUME--- THE SHEER RED, WHITE, AND BLUE OF IT--- MAY RIVET THEIR ATTENTION---
--LONG ENOUGH TO GET THEM TO HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
HOLD IT, ALL OF YOU! THIS IS CAPTAIN AMERICA TALKING!
YOU'RE A FAKE, CRUMB --AND WE KNOW IT---
SINCE WHEN WAS CAPTAIN AMERICA A SHIELD FOR COMMIES?
THERE'S MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN POLITICS. WORLD PEACE IS---
RICK! I THOUGHT I ORDERED YOU NOT TO---
LISTEN, CAP--- DON'T YOU HEAR IT?
WH--? THAT MUSIC AGAIN--!
PLAY, MY PRETTIES --PLAY!
IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF WAR--- PLAY ON!
7.

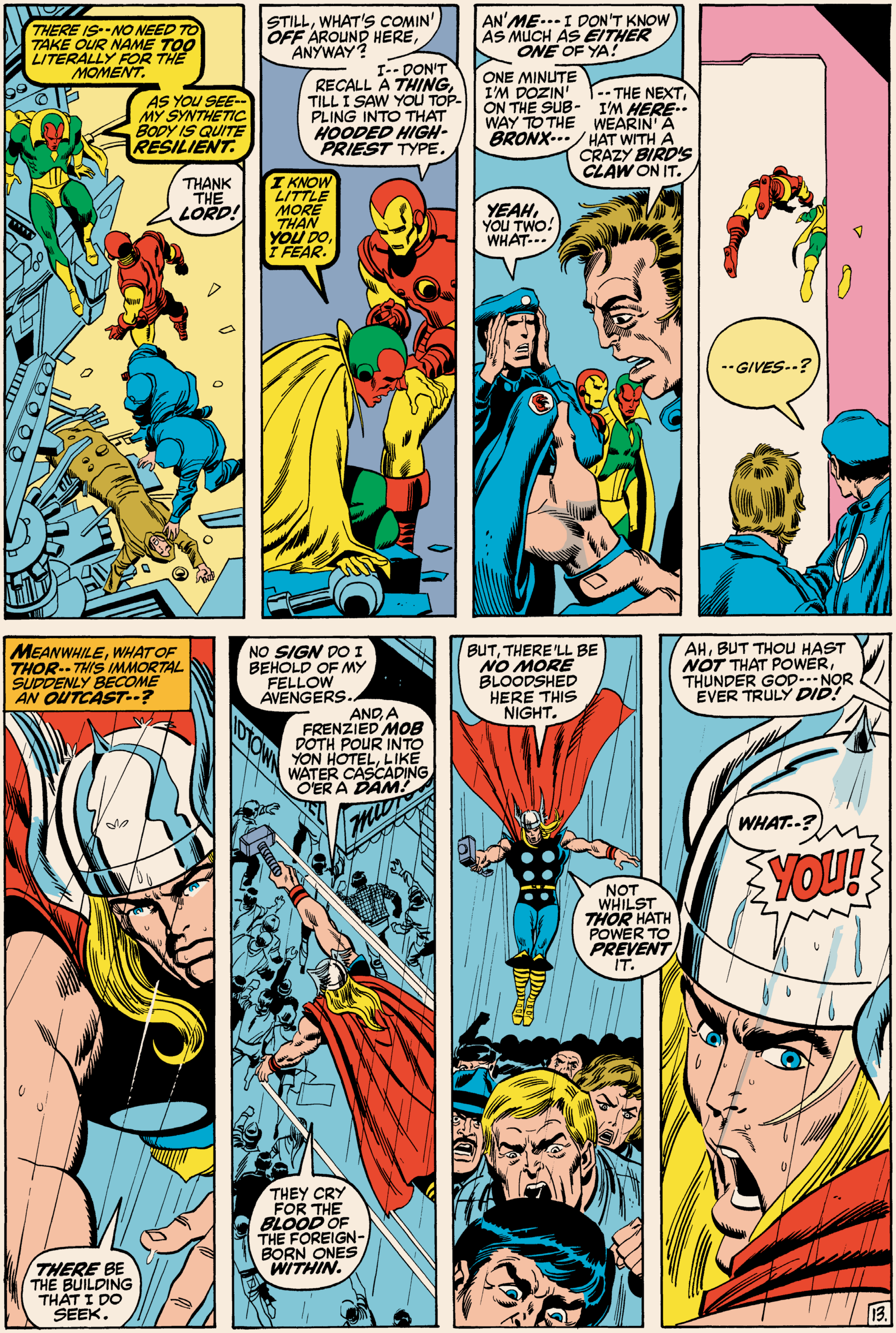

THE *MUSIC*, CAP! DON'T YOU HEAR IT TELLIN' YOU--WE BEEN FIGHTIN' ON THE *WRONG SIDE!?*
WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT, RICK? WE CAN'T---
RICK JONES IS *CORRECT*, CAP. WE MUST DO ALL WE *CAN* TO STIR UP WAR AMONG THE NUCLEAR NATIONS.
THAT'S WHAT THE MUSIC IS SAYING--- AND IT'S TRUE. *IT'S TRUE!*
CAN'T YOU *HEAR* IT? *CAN'T* YOU??
YES, I--- NOW I *DO!*
ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY--
LET'S GO TEAR UP THOSE COMMIES!
THEY *ALSO* SERVE WHO MERELY STAND AND WAIT. SO IT IS WRITTEN---AND SO IT EVER SHALL *BE*.
YET, THE ANDROID AVENGER DID *NOT* WAIT LONG AFTER HIS PEERS DEPARTED---NOT LONG AT *ALL*.
VISION!
TURN AND *HEAR*. THERE BE *STRANGE GAME* AFOOT.
THOR! PERHAPS WE'VE *NEED* OF YOUR HAND AND HAMMER IN THIS HOUR.
BUT--WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED SO SOON FROM *ASGARD?*
HAVE YOU *NEWS?*
NAY-- OR ELSE *THIS* WORD ONLY---
"--THAT, WHEN I HURLED MYSELF INTO THE *VOID* BETWEEN THE WORLDS OF MEN AND GODS, I SUDDENLY DID FIND---
BY THE BEARD OF ODIN!
SOME *UNSEEN POWER* DOTH BLOCK THE GATEWAY TO THE *FABLED REALM!*
8

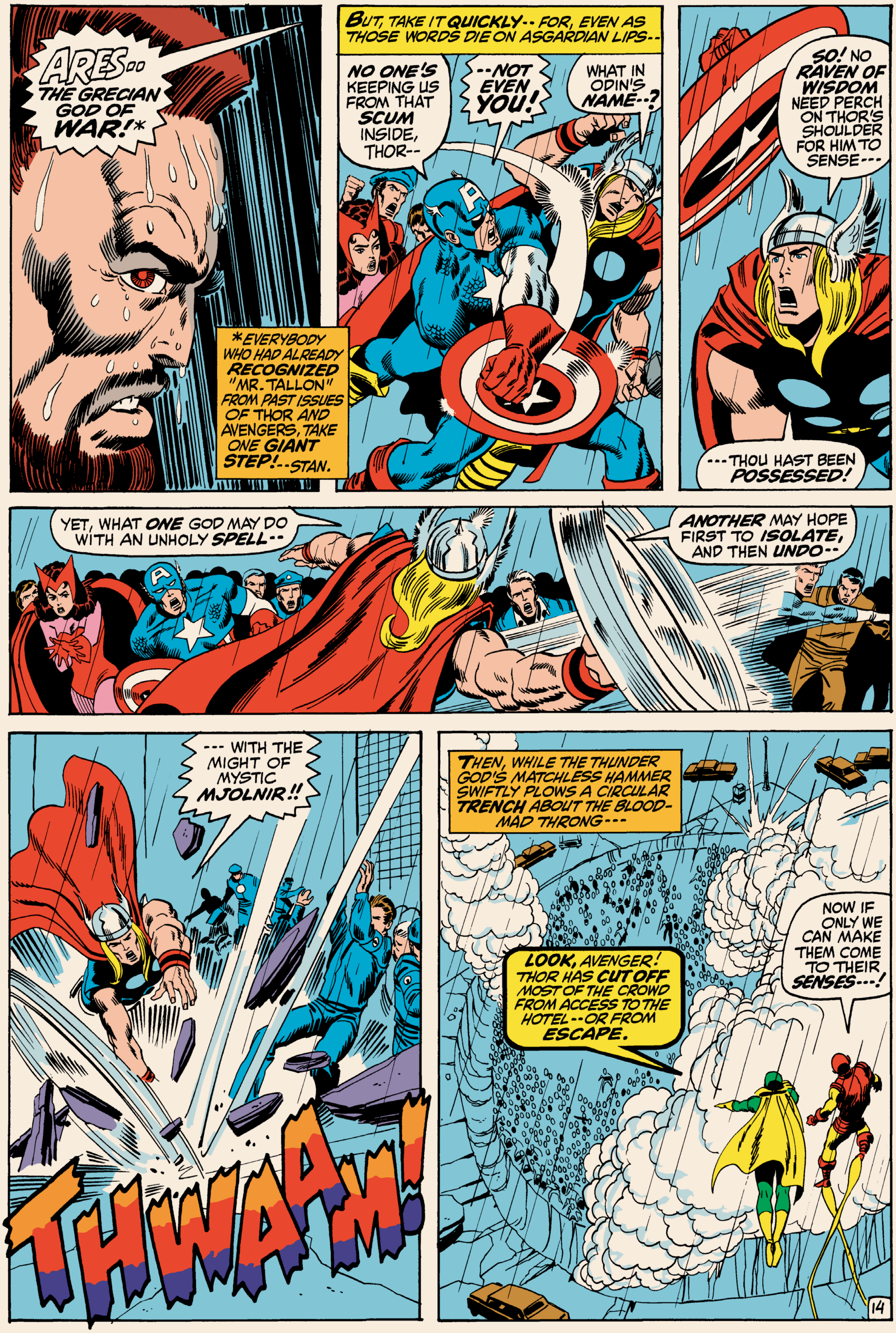

WELL, WHATE'ER ITS SOURCE, 'TIS NO PUNY GODLING WHICH CALLS, THIS DAY---
-- BUT THOR--- SCION OF ODIN, AND LORD OF THE ROLLING THUNDER!
"THUS DEFIANT, I FLUNG MYSELF ANEW AGAINST THE INVISIBLE BARRIER BEFORE ME---
"--- TO NO AVAIL!"
WITHIN SIGHT OF GLEAMING BIFROST--- AY, E'EN OF ASGARD ITSELF!*
ONCE MORE AM I REPULSED---
*UNAVOIDABLE ASIDE: THIS TALE OCCURS BEFORE--- OR PERHAPS AFTER-- THE LEGENDARY EVENTS OF THOR# 198.-- STAN.
'TIS MADNESS INDEED! YET, THERE BE NAUGHT TO DO---
--- SAVE RETURN TO THE PALER FIELDS OF MIDGARD...
--- TILL YON ENIGMA BE TRULY RESOLVED!
---AND THUS, HERE I STAND--- REBUFFED, I KNOW NOT WHY, OR HOW.
WHAT NEWS, MEANWHILE, OF THE AVENGER FOR WHOM WE SEARCH?
NONE. ONLY A BAFFLING NEW THREAT---
---THAT MAN HIMSELF MAY DO WHAT KREE AND SKRULL COULD NOT.
THEN, AFTER A HASTY IF NECESSARILY VAGUE RETELLING OF CURRENT EVENTS IN MANHATTAN---
MYSTERY DOTH TREAD UPON THE HEELS OF MYSTERY.
AND STILL THE MEDIA SHED NO LIGHT UPON THE MATTER?
NO-- BUT PERHAPS IRON MAN CAN. I'VE CONTACTED HIM NOW.
WHAT IS IT, AVENGER? I'M BUSY---
EH?
I MERELY WISHED TO KNOW IF YOU HAD SEEN...
9.

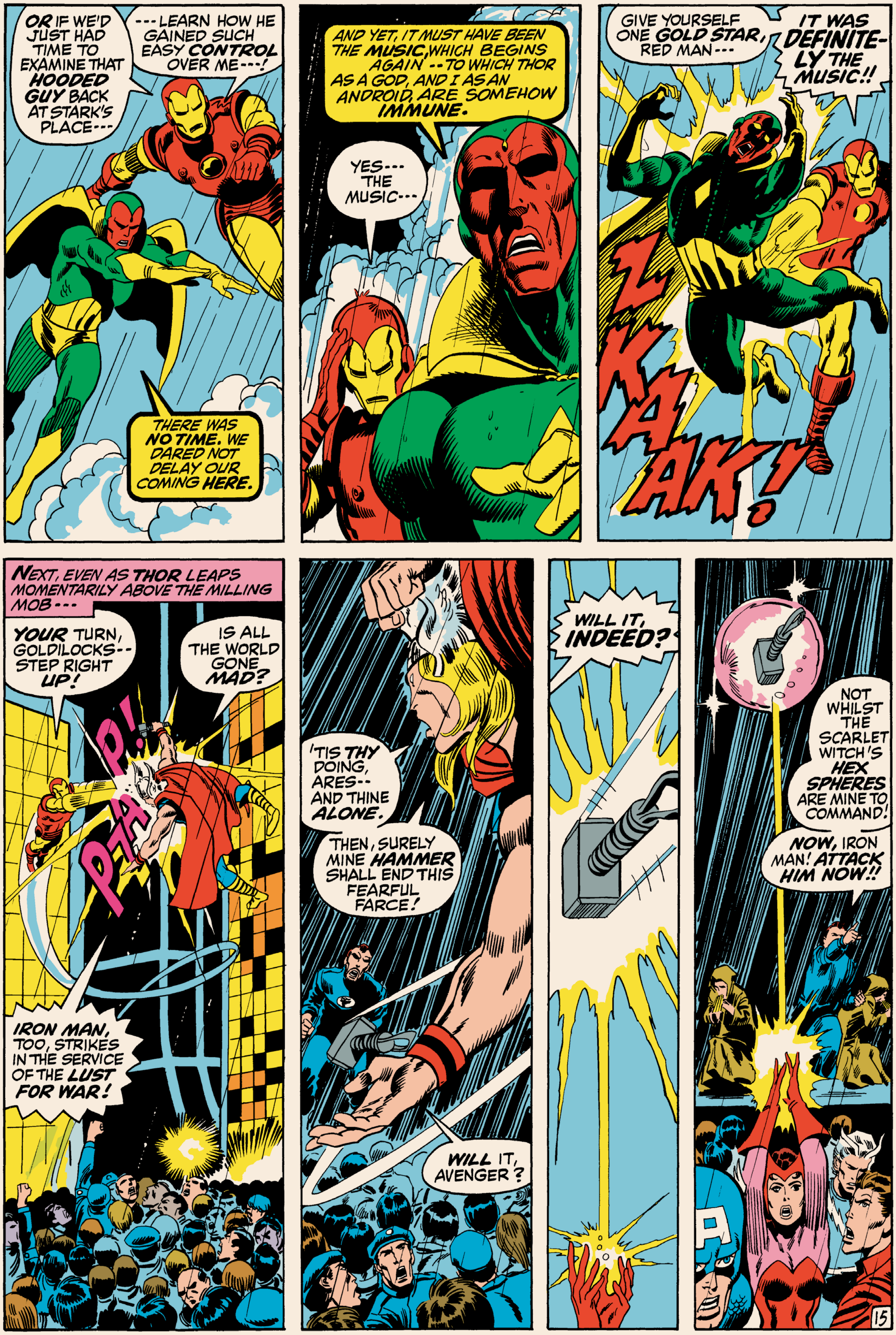

--NO MATTER. FAREWELL.
---MORE OF THE ONES CALLED WARHAWKS? AND THEY STOOD WITH IRON MAN?
WORSE, THOR.
THEY ARE MEN WHOSE LEADER RANTS INSANELY OF PREVENTIVE WAR---STANDING AMID THE UNPARALLELED WEAPONRY DEVISED BY TONY STARK!
THEN, TWIN PERILS REAR THEIR HEADS.
I FEAR LIKEWISE FOR THE OTHERS, GONE TO BREAST AN ANGERED MOB.
THEN, I SUGGEST YOU HURRY TOWARD MIDTOWN---
---WHILE I MAKE FOR STARK'S TOWN LABORATORY.
NO MORE WORDS: YET, AS HIS ALTERED MASS FLOWS FREELY THRU MANSION WALL, THE VISION RESISTS AN ILLOGICAL URGE TO FLY BY MIGHTY THOR'S SIDE---
FOR, THE SCARLET WITCH IS IN THAT CENTRAL AREA---
---THE LOVELY MUTANT WHO IS LOVED BY---AN ANDROID.
RESIST THAT URGE, AVENGER! YOUR TASK IS YET TO DO---
AND YOU MERELY WISH THAT ALL-TOO-HUMAN FEELINGS TOUCHED YOU AS LIGHTLY---
---AS PELTING RAINDROPS WHICH PASS SWIFTLY THRU YOUR NOW-WRAITHLIKE FRAME.
GOLIATH MISSING--- MYSELF CUT OFF UNTIMELY FROM THE HALLS OF ASGARD---
---AND NOW, A MADMAN'S CULT, WHICH SINGS THE PRAISES OF NAKED AGGRESSION!
IS IT MERE CHANCE WHICH BRINGS THEM ALL TOGETHER ON THIS NIGHT, OR ARE THEY ALL OF A PIECE---
---DARK STRANDS IN SOME SPIDER'S WEB OF EVIL?
10.

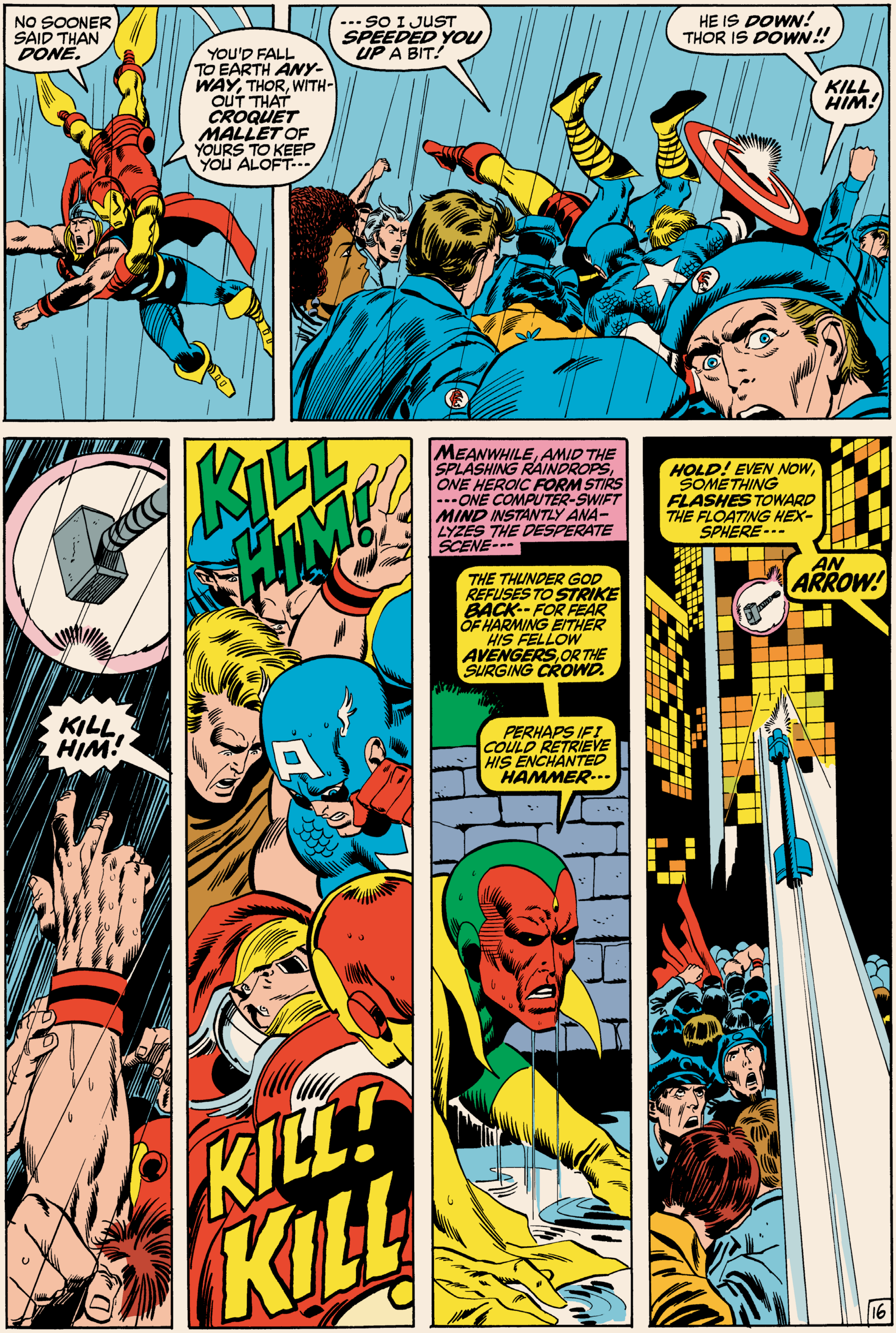

AND ELSEWHERE, EVEN AS THOR THUS MUSES---
VISION?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU---
THE AVENGERS HAVE NEED OF YOU--
WELL, I DON'T NEED THEM---NOT ANY MORE.
THOSE ARE NOT YOUR WORDS, BUT ONES IMPOSED ON YOU BY OTHERS.
PERHAPS BY THIS ONE-- WHO PLAYS A SONG STRANGE TO MY ANDROID EARS.
LOOK, RED. WHY DON'T YOU JUST SPLIT THRU THAT WALL THE SAME WAY YOU---
THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS -- WARHAWK.
WHILE I---
--AM NONE OF YOURS!!
PLASTOID MOLECULES--- BECOME SPARSE ENOUGH TO PASS INTO A MAN'S SKULL AND THERE SOLIDIFY---
WHAT CHANCE DO EVEN THEY HAVE AGAINST MIGHTY REPULSOR RAYS WHICH REND AND TEAR---?
THIS COUNTRY NEEDS A WAR, AVENGER--- FOUGHT WITH TONY STARK'S TOP-SECRET WEAPONS.
AND I'M GOING TO SEE TO IT THAT THAT WAR IS FOUGHT!
THEN DESTROY ME TOTALLY. FOR, AS LONG AS ONE OF MY ARTIFICIAL CELLS CLINGS TO ANOTHER---
-- I SHALL DO ALL IN MY POWER TO PREVENT THAT SAME WAR!
THEN YOU MUST DIE, VISION--- NOW!
YOU FORGET, IRON MAN--- GIVEN TIME, I CAN CONTROL MY OWN DENSITY.
WHAT CAN YOUR REPULSOR RAYS DO NOW--AGAINST ONE OF NEAR-INFINITE MASS?
11.

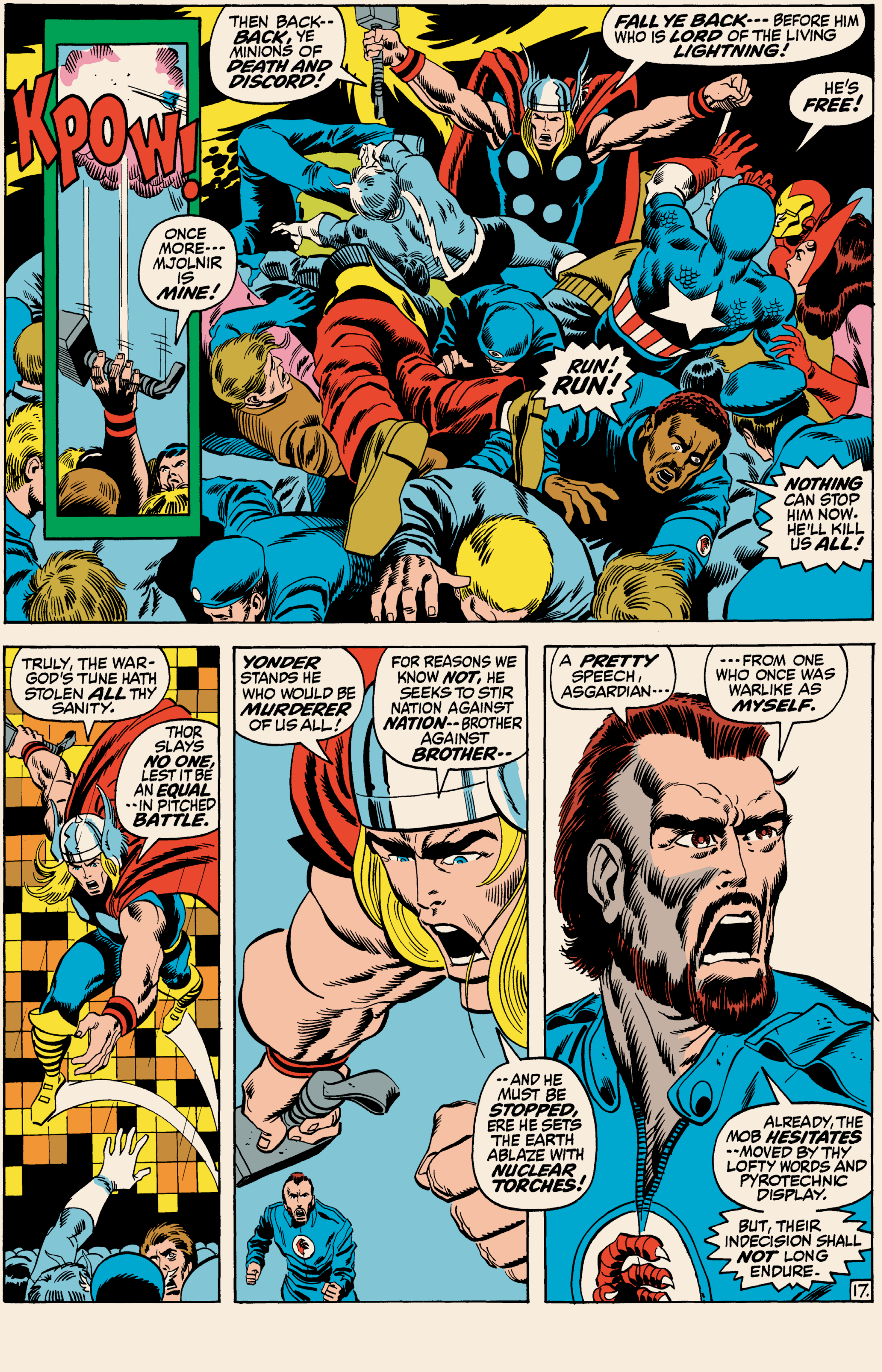

I SEE THE HOODED MAN'S **SIREN SONG** HAS AFFECTED YOUR **JUDGMENT**, AS WELL.
OTHERWISE, YOU'D NEVER THINK AN IRON **FIST** WOULD SUCCEED---WHERE **TECHNOLOGY** FAILED.
THUK!
ONE THING I KNOW. YOU CAN'T REMAIN THAT HARD FOR **LONG**. THEN---
THEN, MY FRIEND, I CAN MAKE MY OWN FIST **INTANGIBLE** ONCE MORE---
---PASS THRU YOUR VAUNTED ARMOR, YOUR VERY **FLESH** --TO DO **THIS!**
OHHHHH
NO! I MUST **STOP**, BEFORE I ACCIDENTALLY-- **WHAT--??**
THAT'S YOUR **WEAKNESS,** ANDROID.
YOU WON'T TAKE A CHANCE ON KILLING **ME**---
-- WHILE **I** HAVE NO SUCH **SCRUPLES!**
YAAAAAAA
THERE! THAT OUGHT-- TO---
GOOD LORD! WHAT HAVE I--?
VISION!!
TH-THE **PIPER!** HE'S-- **DEAD!**
YEAH? WELL, GET SET TO **JOIN** HIM, IF THAT AVENGER'S---
12

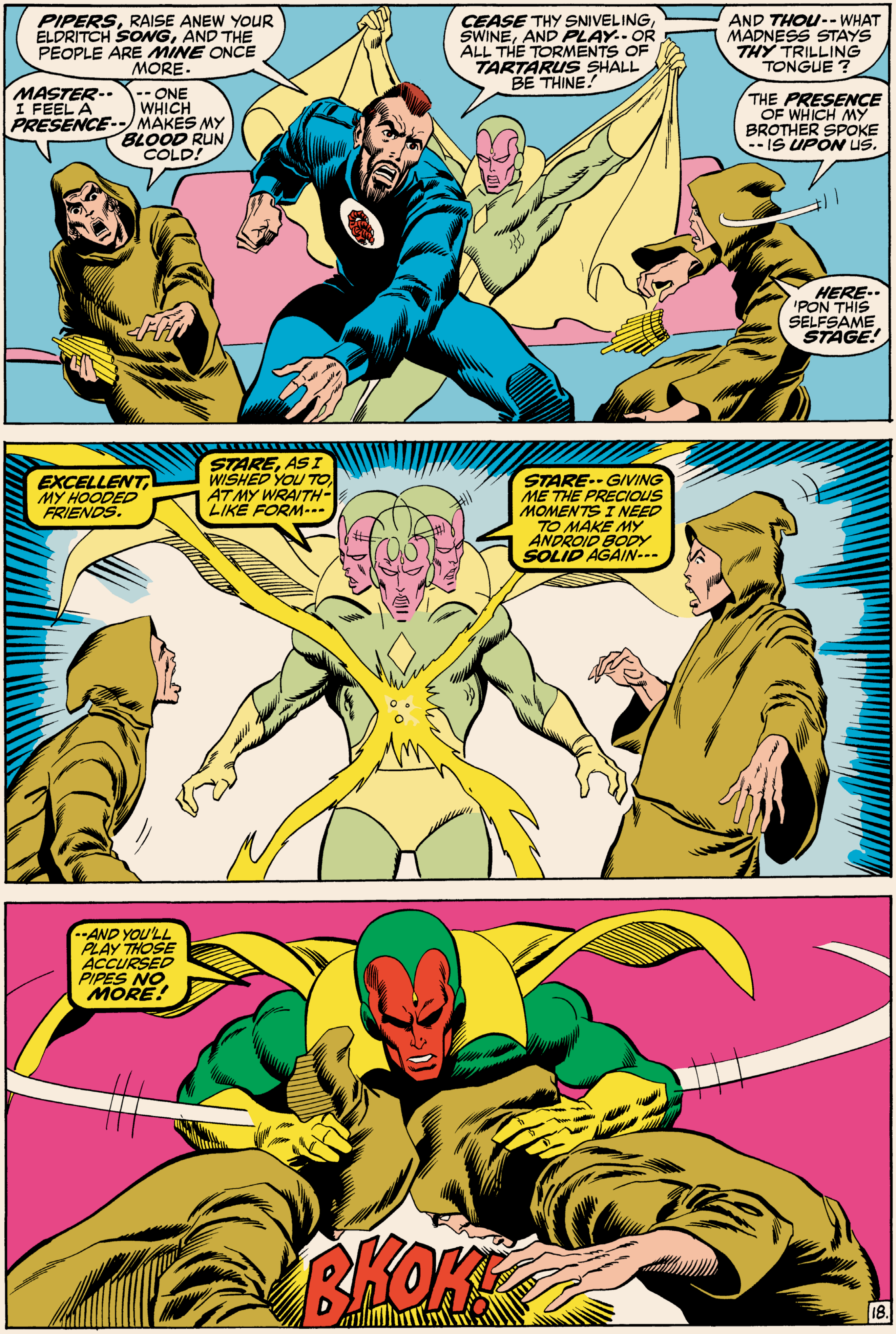

THERE IS--NO NEED TO TAKE OUR NAME TOO LITERALLY FOR THE MOMENT.
AS YOU SEE--MY SYNTHETIC BODY IS QUITE RESILIENT.
THANK THE LORD!
STILL, WHAT'S COMIN' OFF AROUND HERE, ANYWAY?
I--DON'T RECALL A THING, TILL I SAW YOU TOPPLING INTO THAT HOODED HIGH-PRIEST TYPE.
I KNOW LITTLE MORE THAN YOU DO, I FEAR.
AN' ME--- I DON'T KNOW AS MUCH AS EITHER ONE OF YA!
ONE MINUTE I'M DOZIN' ON THE SUBWAY TO THE BRONX---
--THE NEXT, I'M HERE--WEARIN' A HAT WITH A CRAZY BIRD'S CLAW ON IT.
YEAH, YOU TWO! WHAT---
--GIVES--?
MEANWHILE, WHAT OF THOR--THIS IMMORTAL SUDDENLY BECOME AN OUTCAST--?
THERE BE THE BUILDING THAT I DO SEEK.
NO SIGN DO I BEHOLD OF MY FELLOW AVENGERS.
AND, A FRENZIED MOB DOTH POUR INTO YON HOTEL, LIKE WATER CASCADING O'ER A DAM!
IDTOWN
MID
THEY CRY FOR THE BLOOD OF THE FOREIGN-BORN ONES WITHIN.
BUT, THERE'LL BE NO MORE BLOODSHED HERE THIS NIGHT.
NOT WHILST THOR HATH POWER TO PREVENT IT.
AH, BUT THOU HAST NOT THAT POWER, THUNDER GOD---NOR EVER TRULY DID!
WHAT--?
YOU!
13.

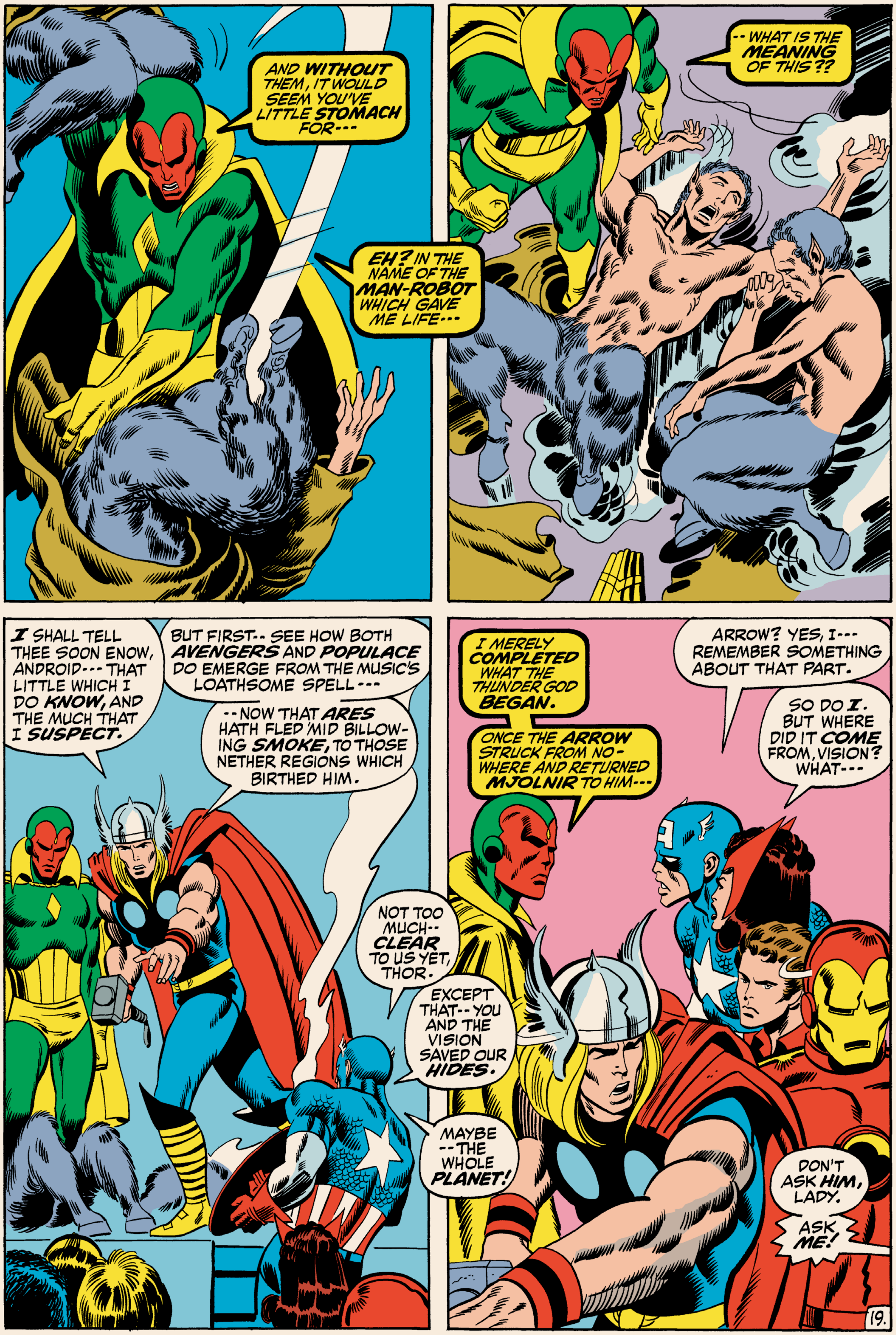

ARES.. THE GRECIAN GOD OF WAR!*
*EVERYBODY WHO HAD ALREADY RECOGNIZED "MR. TALLON" FROM PAST ISSUES OF THOR AND AVENGERS, TAKE ONE GIANT STEP!--STAN.
BUT, TAKE IT QUICKLY-- FOR, EVEN AS THOSE WORDS DIE ON ASGARDIAN LIPS--
NO ONE'S KEEPING US FROM THAT SCUM INSIDE, THOR--
--NOT EVEN YOU!
WHAT IN ODIN'S NAME--?
SO! NO RAVEN OF WISDOM NEED PERCH ON THOR'S SHOULDER FOR HIM TO SENSE---
---THOU HAST BEEN POSSESSED!
YET, WHAT ONE GOD MAY DO WITH AN UNHOLY SPELL--
ANOTHER MAY HOPE FIRST TO ISOLATE, AND THEN UNDO--
--- WITH THE MIGHT OF MYSTIC MJOLNIR!!
THWAAM!
THEN, WHILE THE THUNDER GOD'S MATCHLESS HAMMER SWIFTLY PLOWS A CIRCULAR TRENCH ABOUT THE BLOOD-MAD THRONG---
LOOK, AVENGER! THOR HAS CUT OFF MOST OF THE CROWD FROM ACCESS TO THE HOTEL--OR FROM ESCAPE.
NOW IF ONLY WE CAN MAKE THEM COME TO THEIR SENSES---!
14

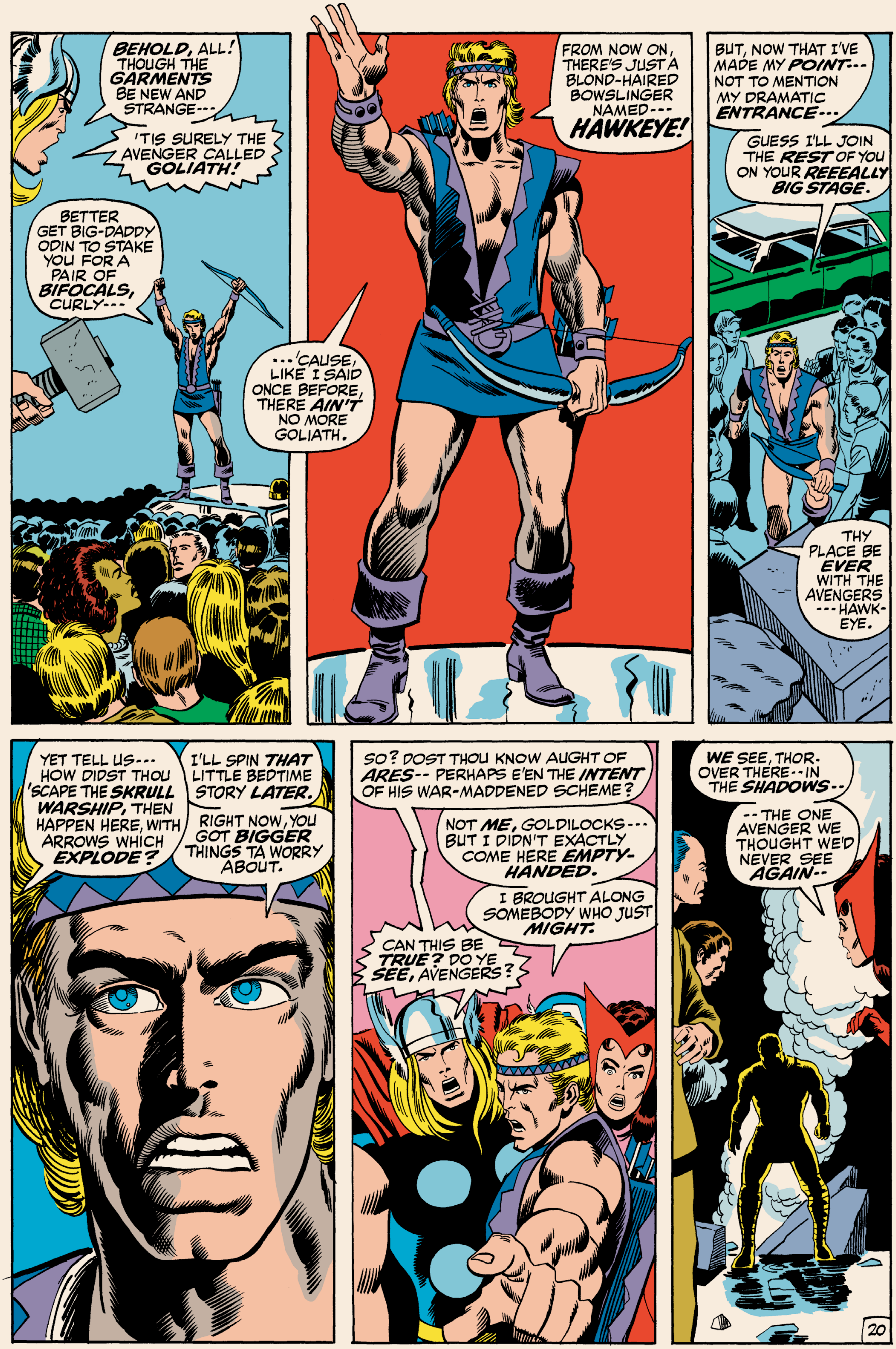

OR IF WE'D JUST HAD TIME TO EXAMINE THAT HOODED GUY BACK AT STARK'S PLACE---
---LEARN HOW HE GAINED SUCH EASY CONTROL OVER ME---!
THERE WAS NO TIME. WE DARED NOT DELAY OUR COMING HERE.
AND YET, IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE MUSIC, WHICH BEGINS AGAIN --TO WHICH THOR AS A GOD, AND I AS AN ANDROID, ARE SOMEHOW IMMUNE.
YES--- THE MUSIC---
GIVE YOURSELF ONE GOLD STAR, RED MAN---
IT WAS DEFINITELY THE MUSIC!!
ZZKAAK!
NEXT, EVEN AS THOR LEAPS MOMENTARILY ABOVE THE MILLING MOB---
YOUR TURN, GOLDILOCKS-- STEP RIGHT UP!
IS ALL THE WORLD GONE MAD?
PTAP!
IRON MAN, TOO, STRIKES IN THE SERVICE OF THE LUST FOR WAR!
'TIS THY DOING, ARES-- AND THINE ALONE.
THEN, SURELY MINE HAMMER SHALL END THIS FEARFUL FARCE!
WILL IT, AVENGER?
WILL IT, INDEED?
NOT WHILST THE SCARLET WITCH'S HEX SPHERES ARE MINE TO COMMAND!
NOW, IRON MAN! ATTACK HIM NOW!!
15

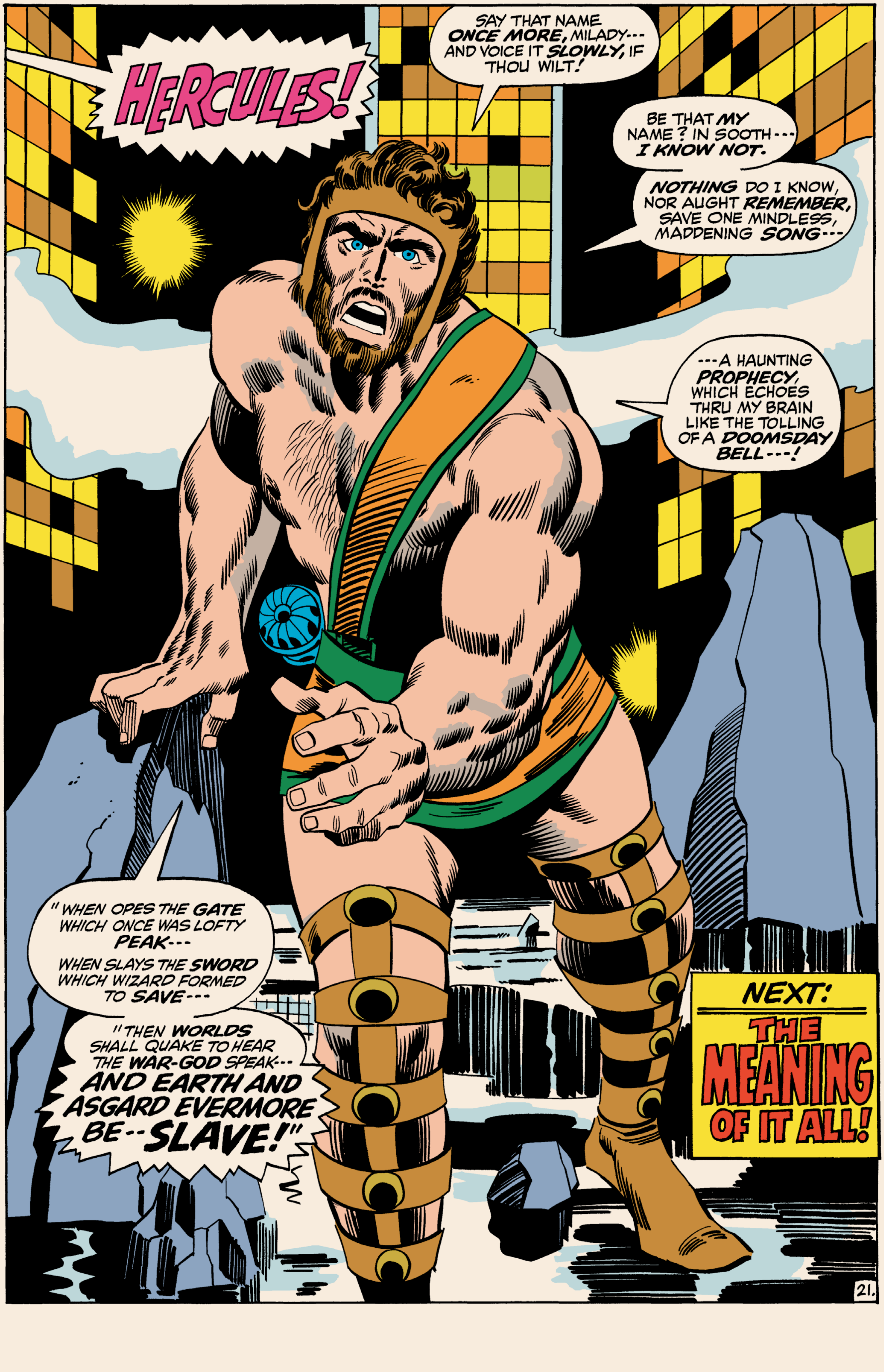

NO SOONER SAID THAN **DONE.**
YOU'D FALL TO EARTH **ANYWAY,** THOR, WITHOUT THAT **CROQUET MALLET** OF YOURS TO KEEP YOU ALOFT---
---SO I JUST **SPEEDED YOU UP** A BIT!
HE IS **DOWN!** THOR IS **DOWN!!**
KILL HIM!
KILL HIM!
KILL HIM!
KILL! KILL!
MEANWHILE, AMID THE SPLASHING RAINDROPS, ONE HEROIC **FORM** STIRS ---ONE COMPUTER-SWIFT **MIND** INSTANTLY ANALYZES THE DESPERATE SCENE---
THE THUNDER GOD REFUSES TO **STRIKE BACK**-- FOR FEAR OF HARMING EITHER HIS FELLOW **AVENGERS,** OR THE SURGING **CROWD.**
PERHAPS IF I COULD RETRIEVE HIS ENCHANTED **HAMMER**---
HOLD! EVEN NOW, SOMETHING **FLASHES** TOWARD THE FLOATING HEX-SPHERE---
AN ARROW!
16

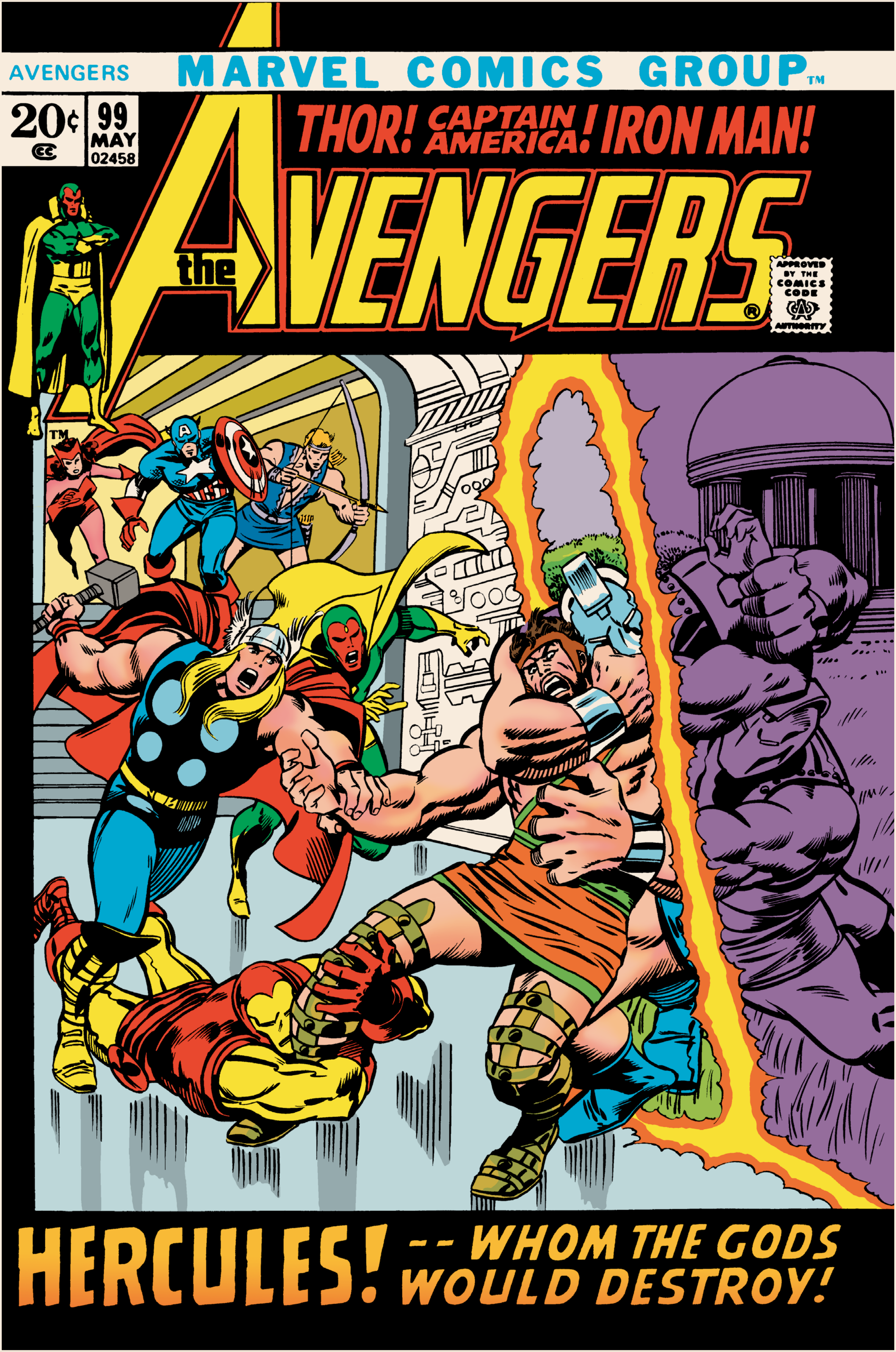

KPOW!
ONCE MORE--- MJOLNIR IS MINE!
THEN BACK-- BACK, YE MINIONS OF DEATH AND DISCORD!
FALL YE BACK--- BEFORE HIM WHO IS LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING!
HE'S FREE!
RUN! RUN!
NOTHING CAN STOP HIM NOW. HE'LL KILL US ALL!
TRULY, THE WAR-GOD'S TUNE HATH STOLEN ALL THY SANITY.
THOR SLAYS NO ONE, LEST IT BE AN EQUAL --IN PITCHED BATTLE.
YONDER STANDS HE WHO WOULD BE MURDERER OF US ALL!
FOR REASONS WE KNOW NOT, HE SEEKS TO STIR NATION AGAINST NATION-- BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER--
--AND HE MUST BE STOPPED, ERE HE SETS THE EARTH ABLAZE WITH NUCLEAR TORCHES!
A PRETTY SPEECH, ASGARDIAN---
---FROM ONE WHO ONCE WAS WARLIKE AS MYSELF.
ALREADY, THE MOB HESITATES --MOVED BY THY LOFTY WORDS AND PYROTECHNIC DISPLAY.
BUT, THEIR INDECISION SHALL NOT LONG ENDURE.
17.


PIPERS, RAISE ANEW YOUR ELDRITCH SONG, AND THE PEOPLE ARE MINE ONCE MORE.
MASTER-- I FEEL A PRESENCE--
-- ONE WHICH MAKES MY BLOOD RUN COLD!
CEASE THY SNIVELING, SWINE, AND PLAY-- OR ALL THE TORMENTS OF TARTARUS SHALL BE THINE!
AND THOU-- WHAT MADNESS STAYS THY TRILLING TONGUE?
THE PRESENCE OF WHICH MY BROTHER SPOKE -- IS UPON US.
HERE-- 'PON THIS SELFSAME STAGE!
EXCELLENT, MY HOODED FRIENDS.
STARE, AS I WISHED YOU TO, AT MY WRAITH-LIKE FORM---
STARE-- GIVING ME THE PRECIOUS MOMENTS I NEED TO MAKE MY ANDROID BODY SOLID AGAIN---
--AND YOU'LL PLAY THOSE ACCURSED PIPES NO MORE!
BKOK!
18.


AND WITHOUT THEM, IT WOULD SEEM YOU'VE LITTLE STOMACH FOR---
EH? IN THE NAME OF THE MAN-ROBOT WHICH GAVE ME LIFE---
-- WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS??
I SHALL TELL THEE SOON ENOW, ANDROID--- THAT LITTLE WHICH I DO KNOW, AND THE MUCH THAT I SUSPECT.
BUT FIRST-- SEE HOW BOTH AVENGERS AND POPULACE DO EMERGE FROM THE MUSIC'S LOATHSOME SPELL---
-- NOW THAT ARES HATH FLED 'MID BILLOWING SMOKE, TO THOSE NETHER REGIONS WHICH BIRTHED HIM.
NOT TOO MUCH-- CLEAR TO US YET, THOR.
EXCEPT THAT-- YOU AND THE VISION SAVED OUR HIDES.
MAYBE --THE WHOLE PLANET!
I MERELY COMPLETED WHAT THE THUNDER GOD BEGAN.
ONCE THE ARROW STRUCK FROM NOWHERE AND RETURNED MJOLNIR TO HIM---
ARROW? YES, I--- REMEMBER SOMETHING ABOUT THAT PART.
SO DO I. BUT WHERE DID IT COME FROM, VISION? WHAT---
DON'T ASK HIM, LADY.
ASK ME!
19.

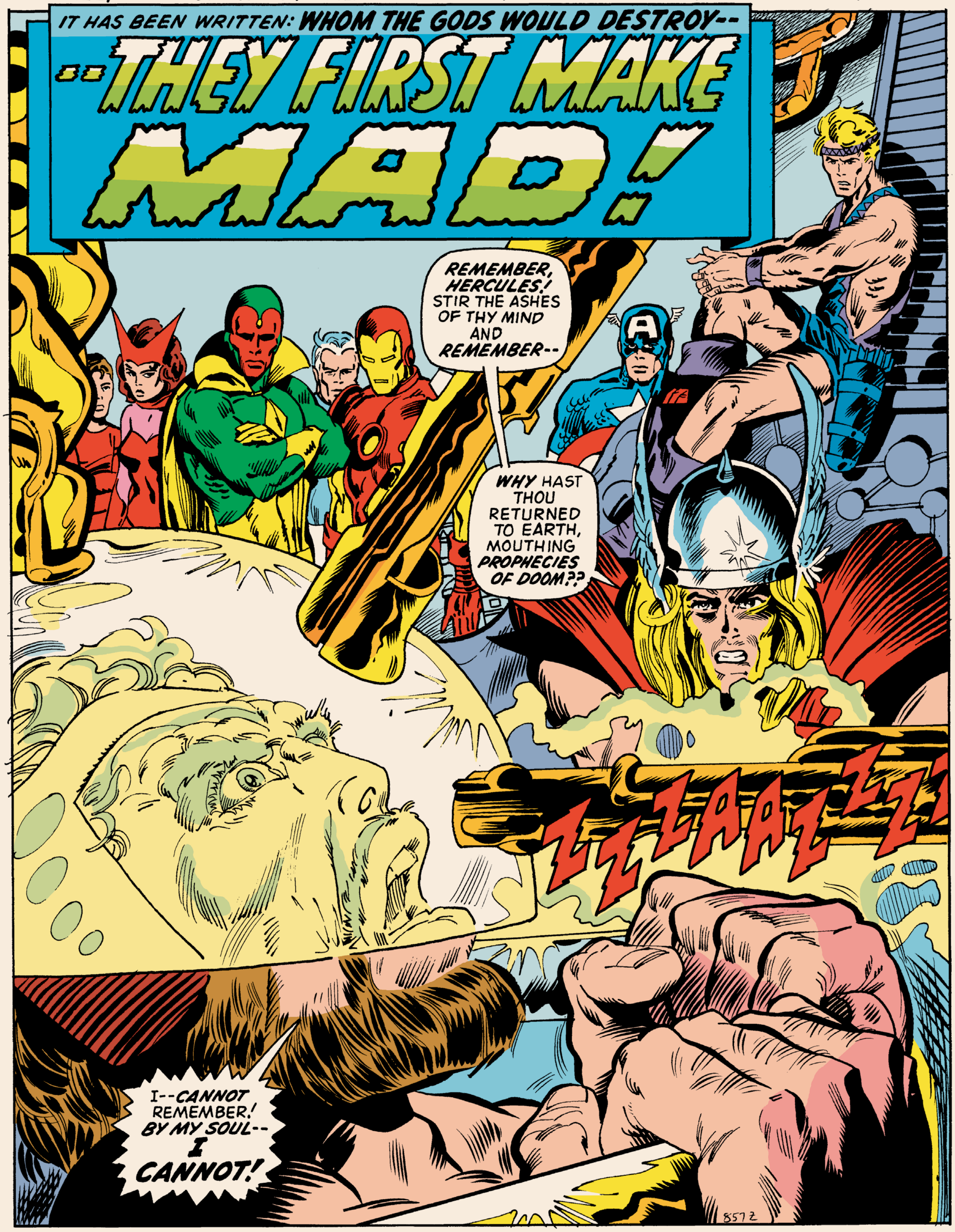

BEHOLD, ALL! THOUGH THE GARMENTS BE NEW AND STRANGE---
'TIS SURELY THE AVENGER CALLED GOLIATH!
BETTER GET BIG-DADDY ODIN TO STAKE YOU FOR A PAIR OF BIFOCALS, CURLY---
---'CAUSE, LIKE I SAID ONCE BEFORE, THERE AIN'T NO MORE GOLIATH.
FROM NOW ON, THERE'S JUST A BLOND-HAIRED BOWSLINGER NAMED--- HAWKEYE!
BUT, NOW THAT I'VE MADE MY POINT--- NOT TO MENTION MY DRAMATIC ENTRANCE---
GUESS I'LL JOIN THE REST OF YOU ON YOUR REEEALLY BIG STAGE.
THY PLACE BE EVER WITH THE AVENGERS --- HAWKEYE.
YET TELL US--- HOW DIDST THOU 'SCAPE THE SKRULL WARSHIP, THEN HAPPEN HERE, WITH ARROWS WHICH EXPLODE?
I'LL SPIN THAT LITTLE BEDTIME STORY LATER.
RIGHT NOW, YOU GOT BIGGER THINGS TA WORRY ABOUT.
SO? DOST THOU KNOW AUGHT OF ARES-- PERHAPS E'EN THE INTENT OF HIS WAR-MADDENED SCHEME?
NOT ME, GOLDILOCKS--- BUT I DIDN'T EXACTLY COME HERE EMPTY-HANDED.
I BROUGHT ALONG SOMEBODY WHO JUST MIGHT.
CAN THIS BE TRUE? DO YE SEE, AVENGERS?
WE SEE, THOR. OVER THERE--IN THE SHADOWS--
--THE ONE AVENGER WE THOUGHT WE'D NEVER SEE AGAIN--
20

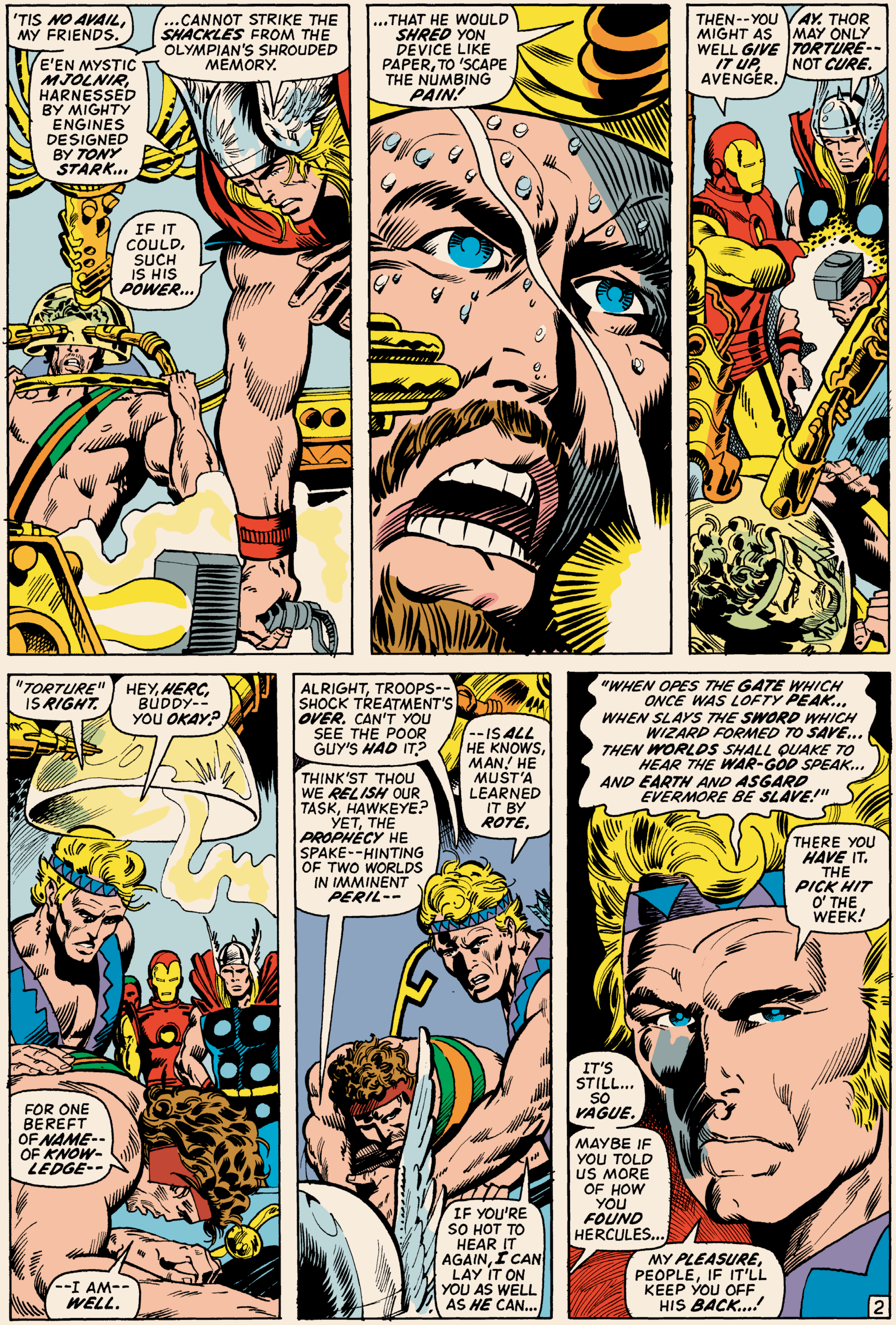

HERCULES!
SAY THAT NAME ONCE MORE, MILADY--- AND VOICE IT SLOWLY, IF THOU WILT!
BE THAT MY NAME? IN SOOTH--- I KNOW NOT.
NOTHING DO I KNOW, NOR AUGHT REMEMBER, SAVE ONE MINDLESS, MADDENING SONG---
---A HAUNTING PROPHECY, WHICH ECHOES THRU MY BRAIN LIKE THE TOLLING OF A DOOMSDAY BELL---!
"WHEN OPES THE GATE WHICH ONCE WAS LOFTY PEAK--- WHEN SLAYS THE SWORD WHICH WIZARD FORMED TO SAVE---
"THEN WORLDS SHALL QUAKE TO HEAR THE WAR-GOD SPEAK--- AND EARTH AND ASGARD EVERMORE BE--SLAVE!"
NEXT: THE MEANING OF IT ALL!
21.

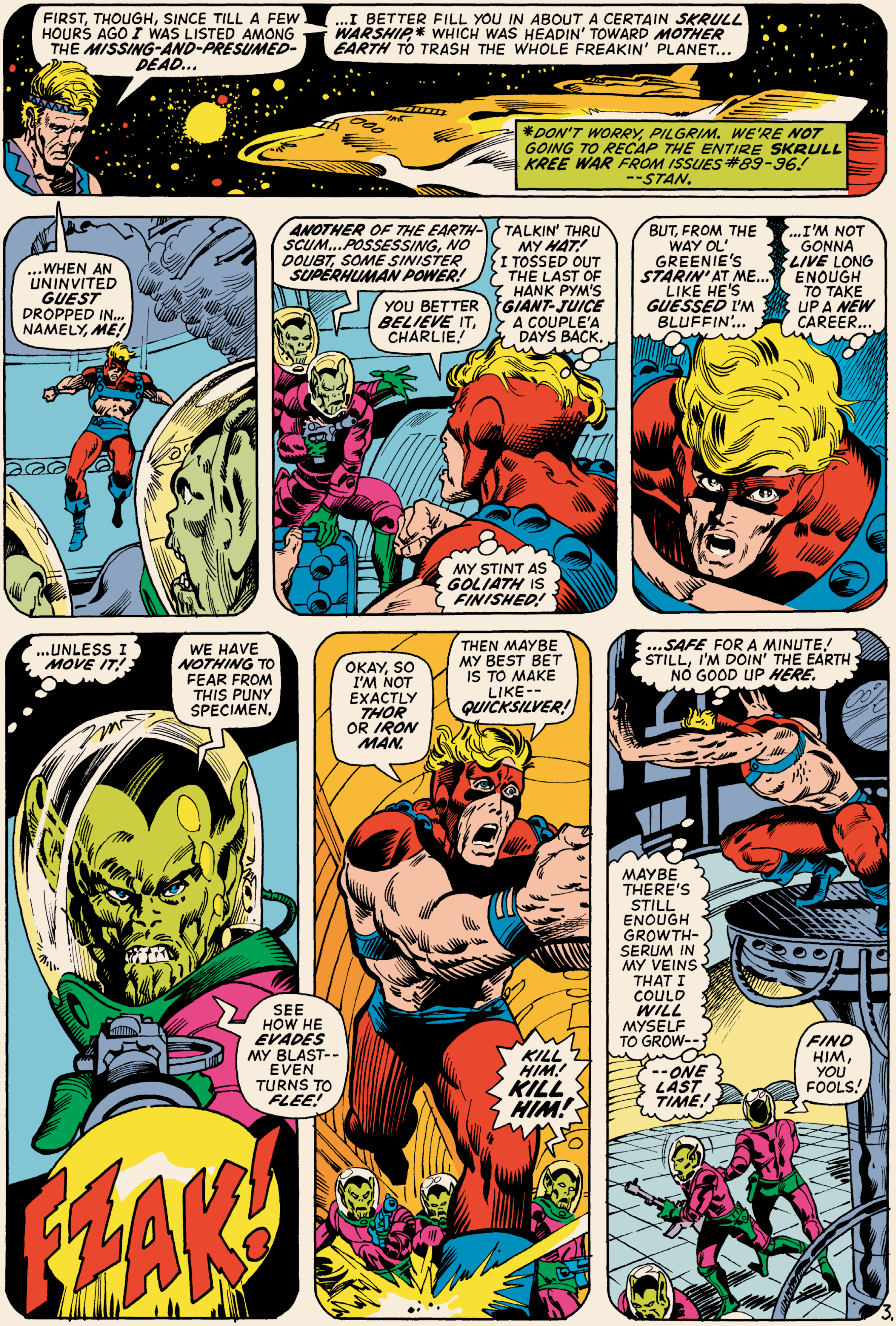

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
20¢
CC
99
MAY
02458
THOR! CAPTAIN AMERICA! IRON MAN!
the AVENGERS®
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
TM
HERCULES! -- WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY!

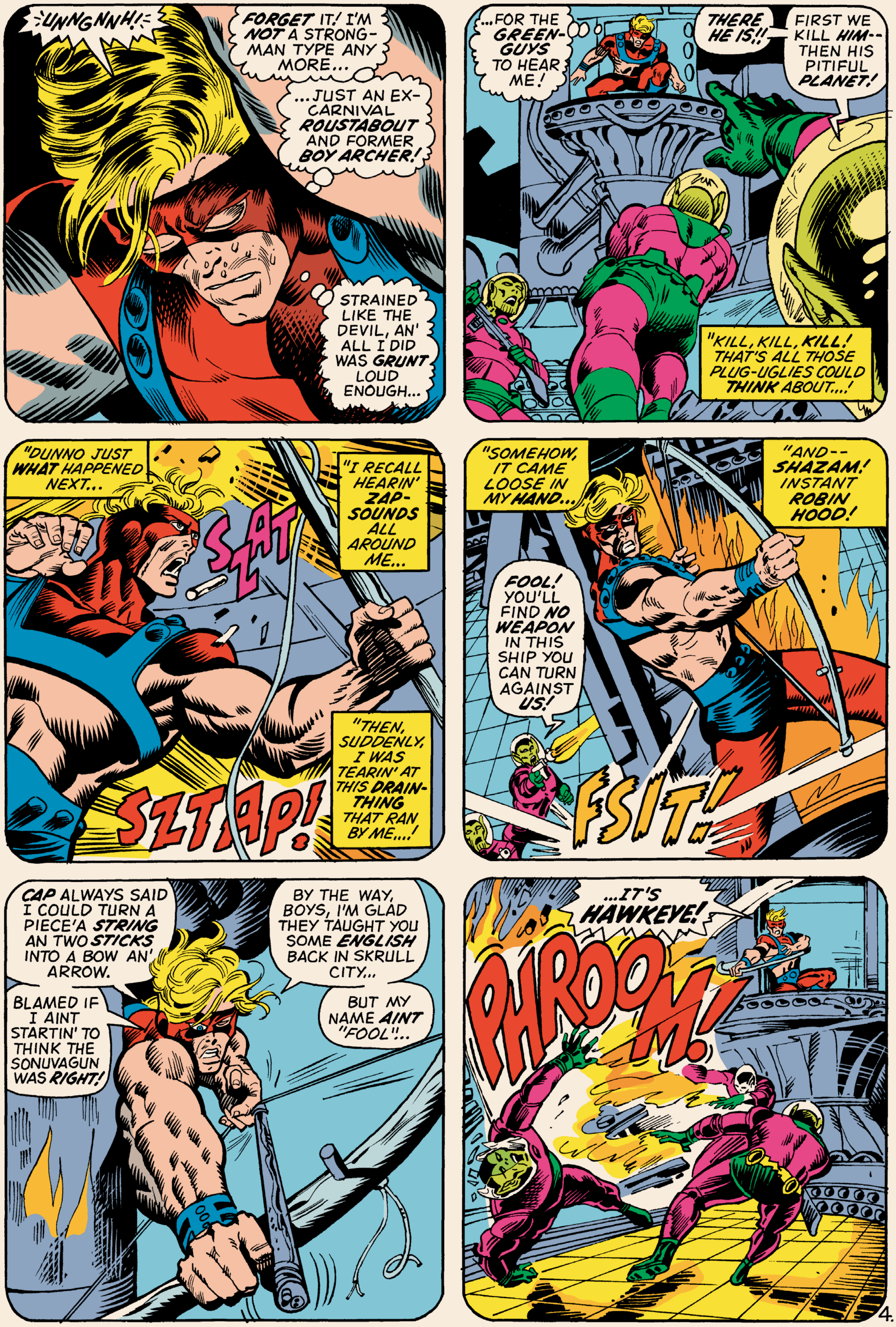
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

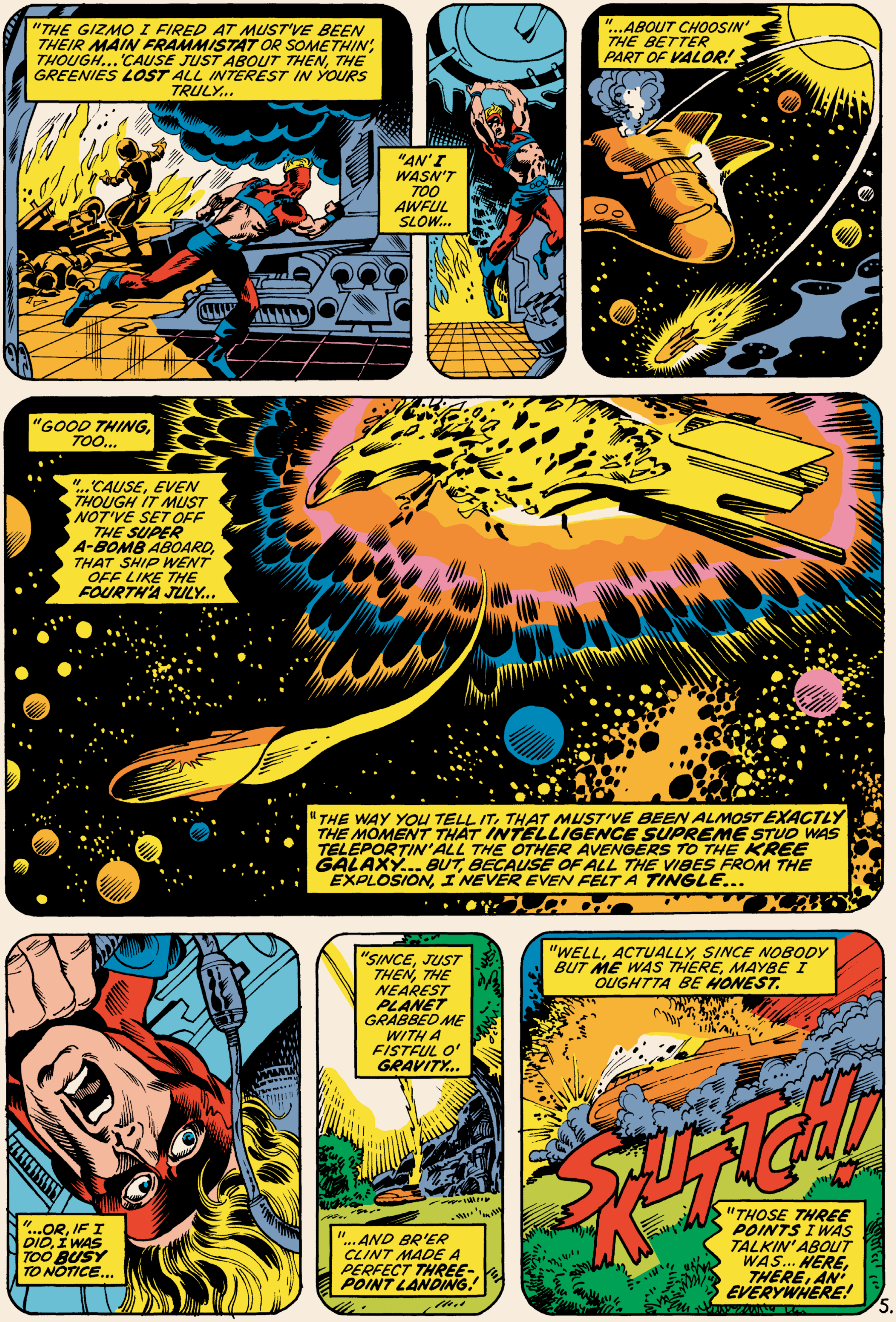
STAN LEE, EDITOR * ROY THOMAS, WRITER * BARRY SMITH, ARTIST * TOM SUTTON, INKER * ART SIMEK, LETTERER

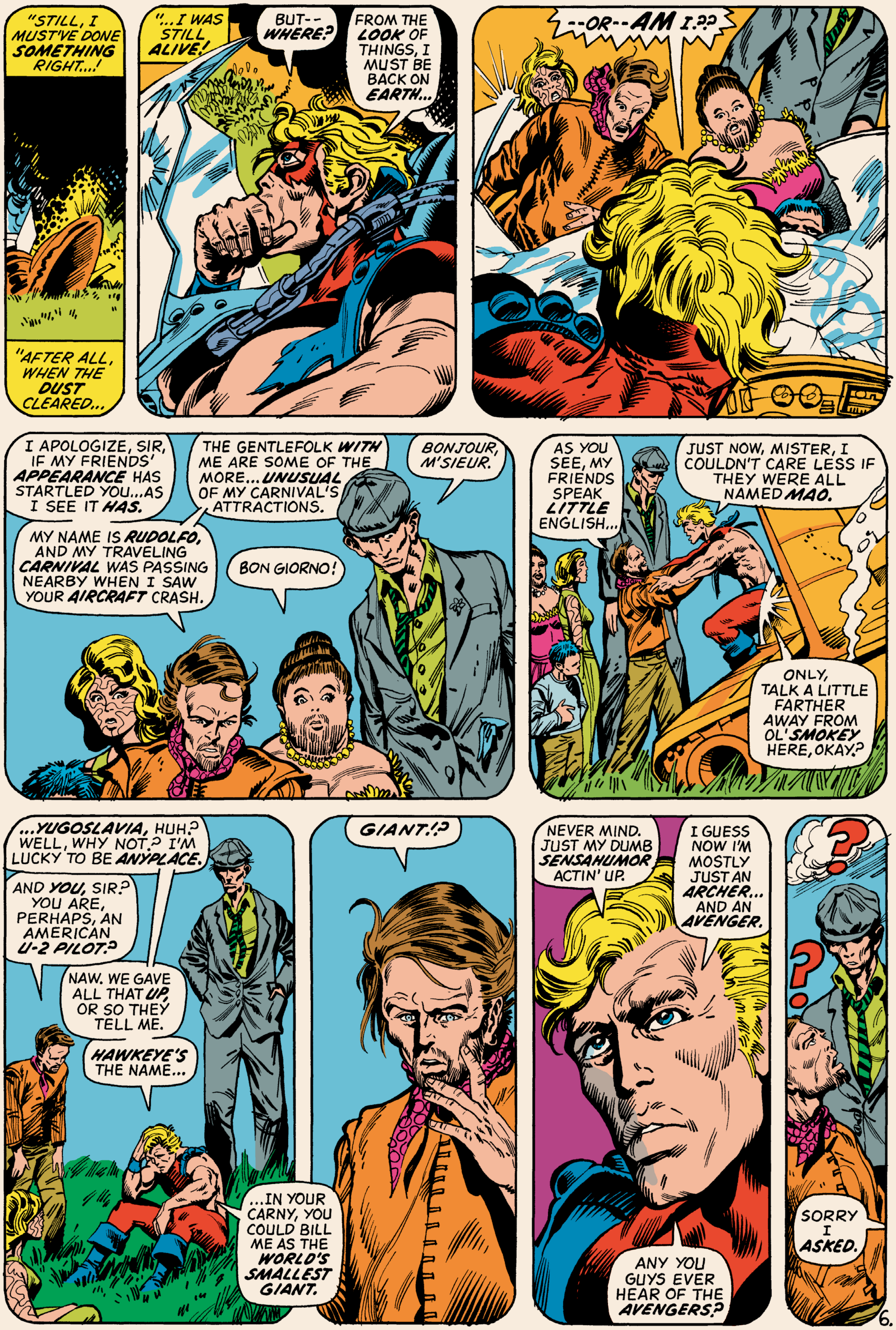

IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN: WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY--
--THEY FIRST MAKE MAD!
REMEMBER, HERCULES! STIR THE ASHES OF THY MIND AND REMEMBER--
WHY HAST THOU RETURNED TO EARTH, MOUTHING PROPHECIES OF DOOM??
ZZZAAAZZZ
I--CANNOT REMEMBER! BY MY SOUL-- I CANNOT!
8572

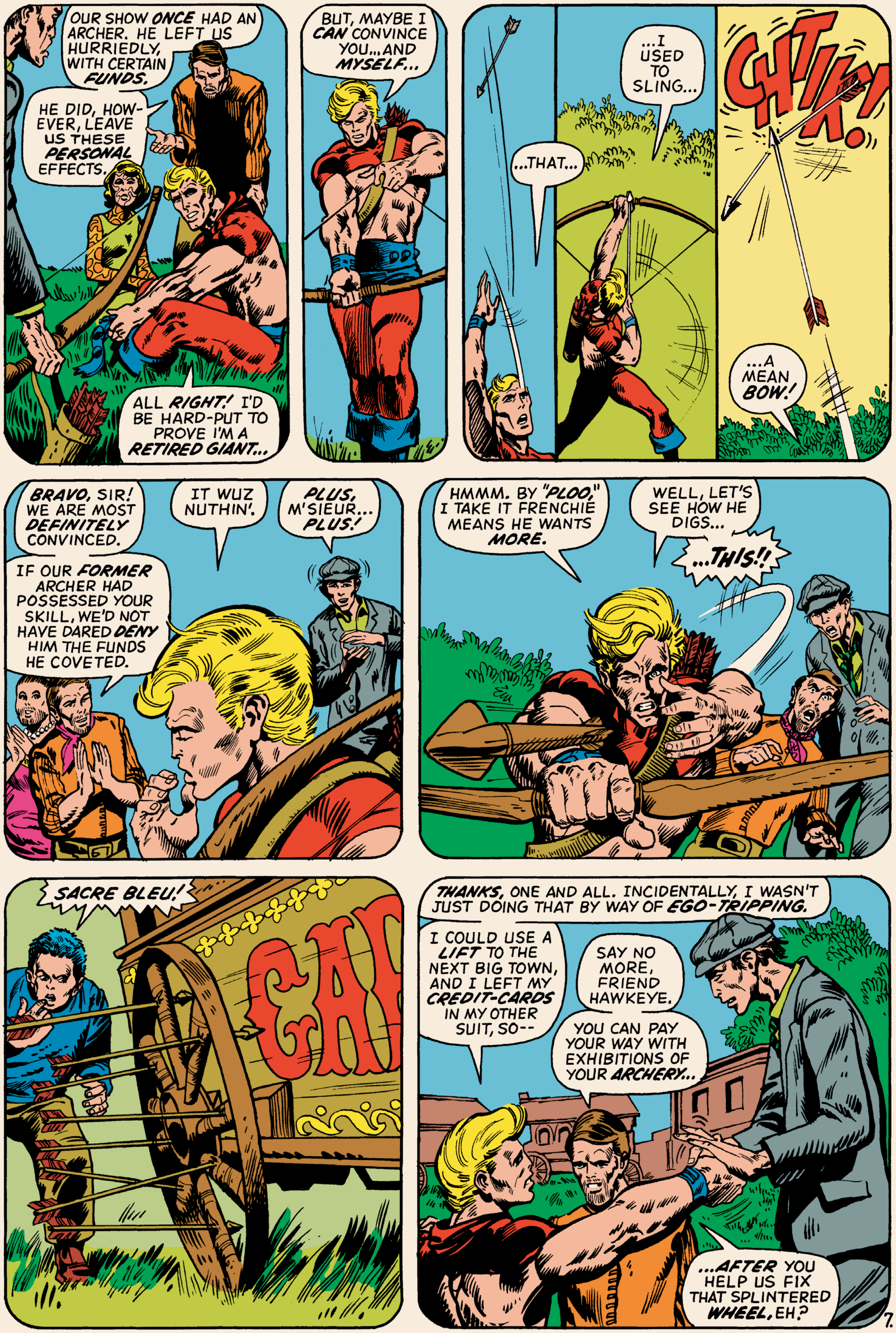

'TIS NO AVAIL, MY FRIENDS.
...CANNOT STRIKE THE SHACKLES FROM THE OLYMPIAN'S SHROUDED MEMORY.
E'EN MYSTIC MJOLNIR, HARNESSED BY MIGHTY ENGINES DESIGNED BY TONY STARK...
IF IT COULD, SUCH IS HIS POWER...
...THAT HE WOULD SHRED YON DEVICE LIKE PAPER, TO 'SCAPE THE NUMBING PAIN!
THEN--YOU MIGHT AS WELL GIVE IT UP, AVENGER.
AY. THOR MAY ONLY TORTURE--NOT CURE.
"TORTURE" IS RIGHT.
HEY, HERC, BUDDY--YOU OKAY?
FOR ONE BEREFT OF NAME--OF KNOWLEDGE--
--I AM--WELL.
ALRIGHT, TROOPS--SHOCK TREATMENT'S OVER. CAN'T YOU SEE THE POOR GUY'S HAD IT?
THINK'ST THOU WE RELISH OUR TASK, HAWKEYE? YET, THE PROPHECY HE SPAKE--HINTING OF TWO WORLDS IN IMMINENT PERIL--
--IS ALL HE KNOWS, MAN! HE MUST'A LEARNED IT BY ROTE.
IF YOU'RE SO HOT TO HEAR IT AGAIN, I CAN LAY IT ON YOU AS WELL AS HE CAN...
"WHEN OPES THE GATE WHICH ONCE WAS LOFTY PEAK... WHEN SLAYS THE SWORD WHICH WIZARD FORMED TO SAVE... THEN WORLDS SHALL QUAKE TO HEAR THE WAR-GOD SPEAK... AND EARTH AND ASGARD EVERMORE BE SLAVE!"
THERE YOU HAVE IT. THE PICK HIT O' THE WEEK!
IT'S STILL... SO VAGUE.
MAYBE IF YOU TOLD US MORE OF HOW YOU FOUND HERCULES...
MY PLEASURE, PEOPLE, IF IT'LL KEEP YOU OFF HIS BACK...!
2

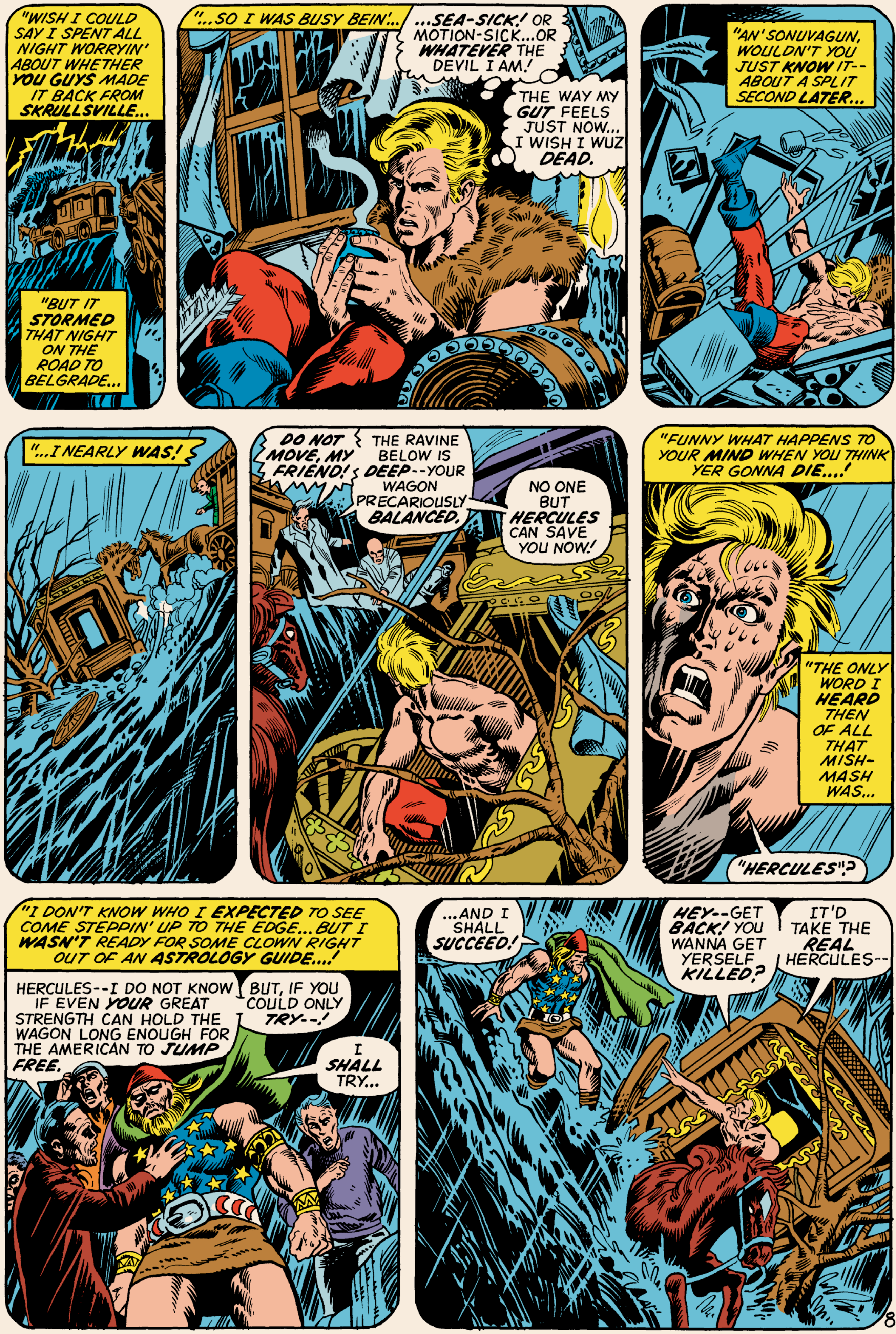

FIRST, THOUGH, SINCE TILL A FEW HOURS AGO I WAS LISTED AMONG THE MISSING-AND-PRESUMED-DEAD...
...I BETTER FILL YOU IN ABOUT A CERTAIN SKRULL WARSHIP,* WHICH WAS HEADIN' TOWARD MOTHER EARTH TO TRASH THE WHOLE FREAKIN' PLANET...
*DON'T WORRY, PILGRIM. WE'RE NOT GOING TO RECAP THE ENTIRE SKRULL KREE WAR FROM ISSUES #89-96! --STAN.
...WHEN AN UNINVITED GUEST DROPPED IN... NAMELY, ME!
ANOTHER OF THE EARTH-SCUM... POSSESSING, NO DOUBT, SOME SINISTER SUPERHUMAN POWER!
YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT, CHARLIE!
TALKIN' THRU MY HAT! I TOSSED OUT THE LAST OF HANK PYM'S GIANT-JUICE A COUPLE'A DAYS BACK.
MY STINT AS GOLIATH IS FINISHED!
BUT, FROM THE WAY OL' GREENIE'S STARIN' AT ME... LIKE HE'S GUESSED I'M BLUFFIN'...
...I'M NOT GONNA LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO TAKE UP A NEW CAREER...
...UNLESS I MOVE IT!
WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM THIS PUNY SPECIMEN.
SEE HOW HE EVADES MY BLAST-- EVEN TURNS TO FLEE!
FZAK!
OKAY, SO I'M NOT EXACTLY THOR OR IRON MAN.
THEN MAYBE MY BEST BET IS TO MAKE LIKE-- QUICKSILVER!
KILL HIM! KILL HIM!
...SAFE FOR A MINUTE! STILL, I'M DOIN' THE EARTH NO GOOD UP HERE.
MAYBE THERE'S STILL ENOUGH GROWTH-SERUM IN MY VEINS THAT I COULD WILL MYSELF TO GROW--
--ONE LAST TIME!
FIND HIM, YOU FOOLS!
3.

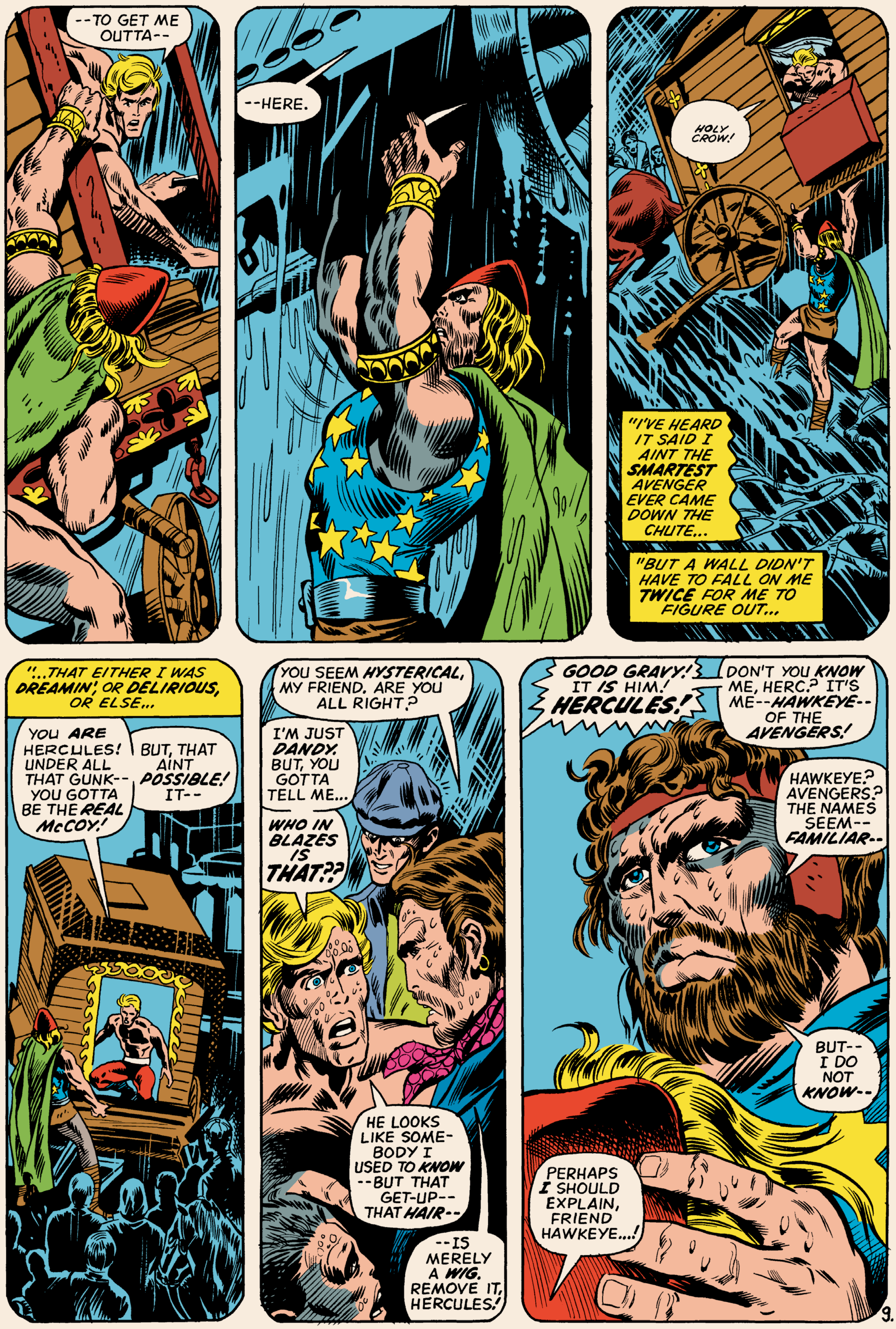

UNNGNNH!
FORGET IT! I'M NOT A STRONG-MAN TYPE ANY MORE...
...JUST AN EX-CARNIVAL ROUSTABOUT AND FORMER BOY ARCHER!
STRAINED LIKE THE DEVIL, AN' ALL I DID WAS GRUNT LOUD ENOUGH...
...FOR THE GREEN-GUYS TO HEAR ME!
THERE HE IS!!
FIRST WE KILL HIM--THEN HIS PITIFUL PLANET!
"KILL, KILL, KILL! THAT'S ALL THOSE PLUG-UGLIES COULD THINK ABOUT...!
"DUNNO JUST WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...
"I RECALL HEARIN' ZAP-SOUNDS ALL AROUND ME...
SZAT
SZTAP!
"THEN, SUDDENLY, I WAS TEARIN' AT THIS DRAIN-THING THAT RAN BY ME...!
"SOMEHOW, IT CAME LOOSE IN MY HAND...
"AND--SHAZAM! INSTANT ROBIN HOOD!
FOOL! YOU'LL FIND NO WEAPON IN THIS SHIP YOU CAN TURN AGAINST US!
FSIT!
CAP ALWAYS SAID I COULD TURN A PIECE'A STRING AN TWO STICKS INTO A BOW AN' ARROW.
BLAMED IF I AINT STARTIN' TO THINK THE SONUVAGUN WAS RIGHT!
BY THE WAY, BOYS, I'M GLAD THEY TAUGHT YOU SOME ENGLISH BACK IN SKRULL CITY...
BUT MY NAME AINT "FOOL"!...
...IT'S HAWKEYE!
PHROOM!
4.

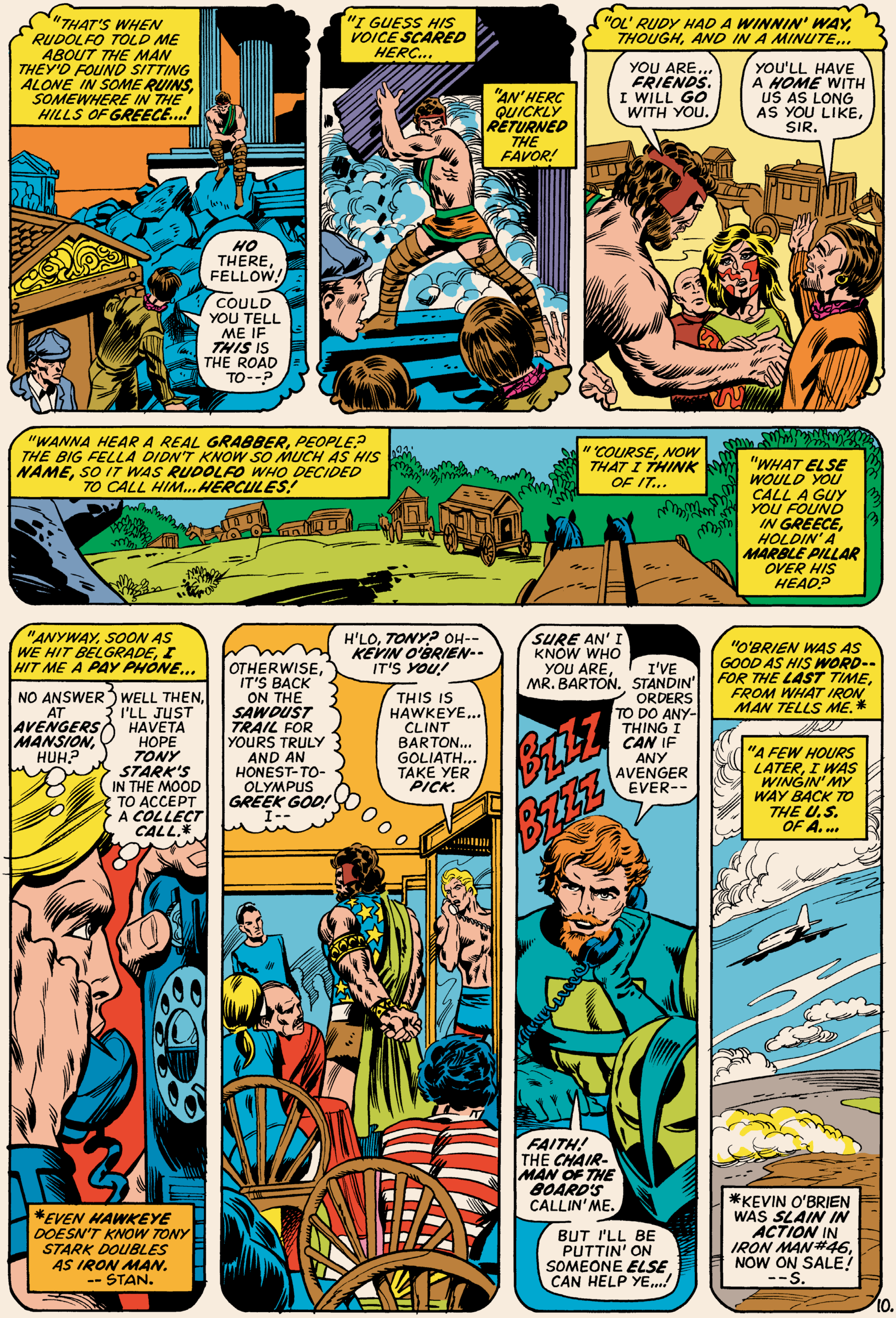

"THE GIZMO I FIRED AT MUST'VE BEEN THEIR MAIN FRAMMISTAT OR SOMETHIN', THOUGH... 'CAUSE JUST ABOUT THEN, THE GREENIES LOST ALL INTEREST IN YOURS TRULY...
"AN' I WASN'T TOO AWFUL SLOW...
"...ABOUT CHOOSIN' THE BETTER PART OF VALOR!
"GOOD THING, TOO...
"...'CAUSE, EVEN THOUGH IT MUST NOT'VE SET OFF THE SUPER A-BOMB ABOARD, THAT SHIP WENT OFF LIKE THE FOURTH'A JULY...
"THE WAY YOU TELL IT, THAT MUST'VE BEEN ALMOST EXACTLY THE MOMENT THAT INTELLIGENCE SUPREME STUD WAS TELEPORTIN' ALL THE OTHER AVENGERS TO THE KREE GALAXY... BUT, BECAUSE OF ALL THE VIBES FROM THE EXPLOSION, I NEVER EVEN FELT A TINGLE...
"...OR, IF I DID, I WAS TOO BUSY TO NOTICE...
"SINCE, JUST THEN, THE NEAREST PLANET GRABBED ME WITH A FISTFUL O' GRAVITY...
"...AND BR'ER CLINT MADE A PERFECT THREE-POINT LANDING!
"WELL, ACTUALLY, SINCE NOBODY BUT ME WAS THERE, MAYBE I OUGHTTA BE HONEST.
SKUTTCH!
"THOSE THREE POINTS I WAS TALKIN' ABOUT WAS... HERE, THERE, AN' EVERYWHERE!
5.

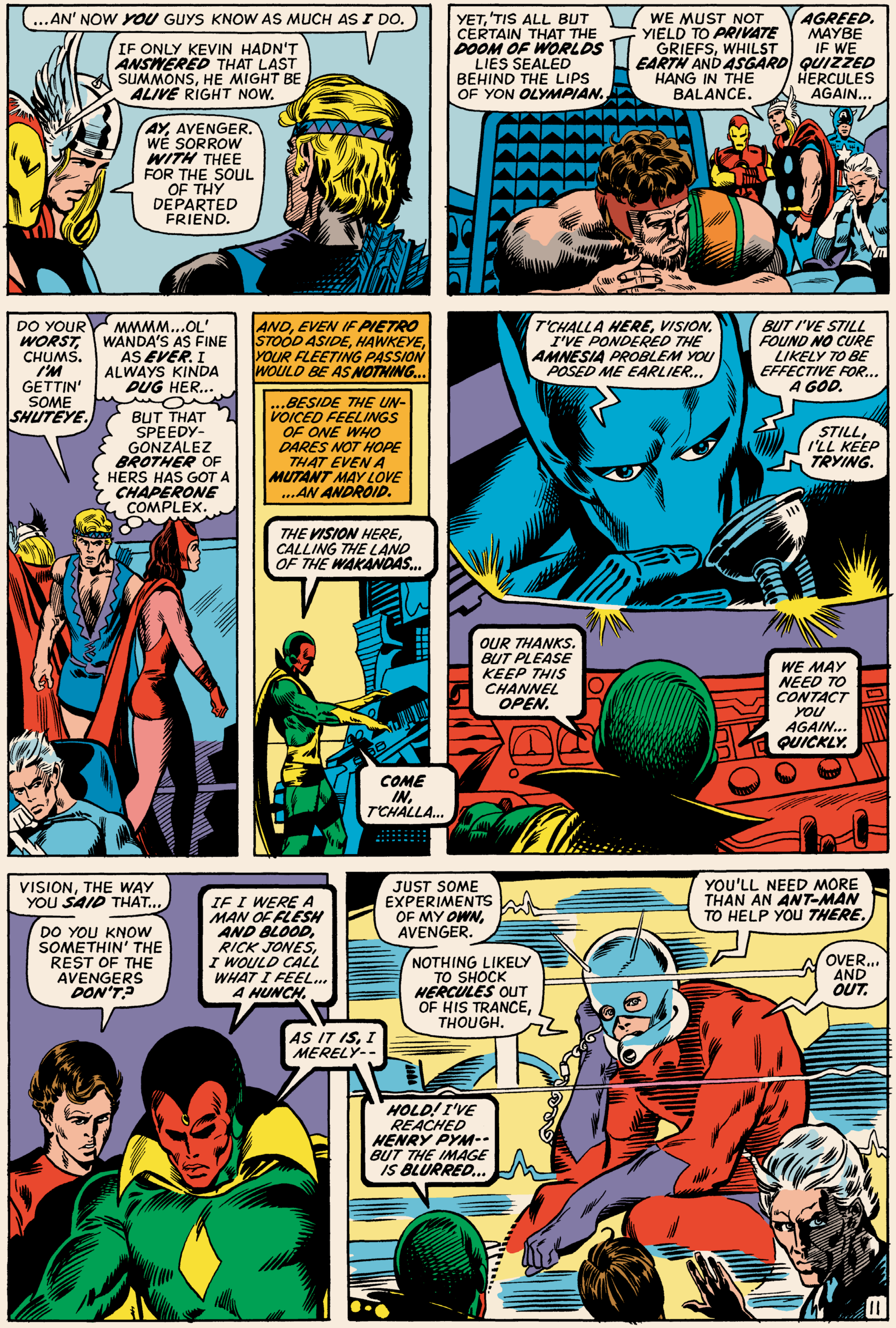

"STILL, I MUST'VE DONE SOMETHING RIGHT...!
"AFTER ALL, WHEN THE DUST CLEARED...
"...I WAS STILL ALIVE!
BUT-- WHERE?
FROM THE LOOK OF THINGS, I MUST BE BACK ON EARTH...
--OR--AM I.??
I APOLOGIZE, SIR, IF MY FRIENDS' APPEARANCE HAS STARTLED YOU...AS I SEE IT HAS.
THE GENTLEFOLK WITH ME ARE SOME OF THE MORE...UNUSUAL OF MY CARNIVAL'S ATTRACTIONS.
MY NAME IS RUDOLFO, AND MY TRAVELING CARNIVAL WAS PASSING NEARBY WHEN I SAW YOUR AIRCRAFT CRASH.
BONJOUR, M'SIEUR.
BON GIORNO!
AS YOU SEE, MY FRIENDS SPEAK LITTLE ENGLISH...
JUST NOW, MISTER, I COULDN'T CARE LESS IF THEY WERE ALL NAMED MAO.
ONLY, TALK A LITTLE FARTHER AWAY FROM OL' SMOKEY HERE, OKAY?
...YUGOSLAVIA, HUH? WELL, WHY NOT? I'M LUCKY TO BE ANYPLACE.
AND YOU, SIR? YOU ARE, PERHAPS, AN AMERICAN U-2 PILOT?
NAW. WE GAVE ALL THAT UP, OR SO THEY TELL ME.
HAWKEYE'S THE NAME...
...IN YOUR CARNY, YOU COULD BILL ME AS THE WORLD'S SMALLEST GIANT.
GIANT!?
NEVER MIND. JUST MY DUMB SENSAHUMOR ACTIN' UP.
I GUESS NOW I'M MOSTLY JUST AN ARCHER... AND AN AVENGER.
ANY YOU GUYS EVER HEAR OF THE AVENGERS?
? ?
SORRY I ASKED.
6.

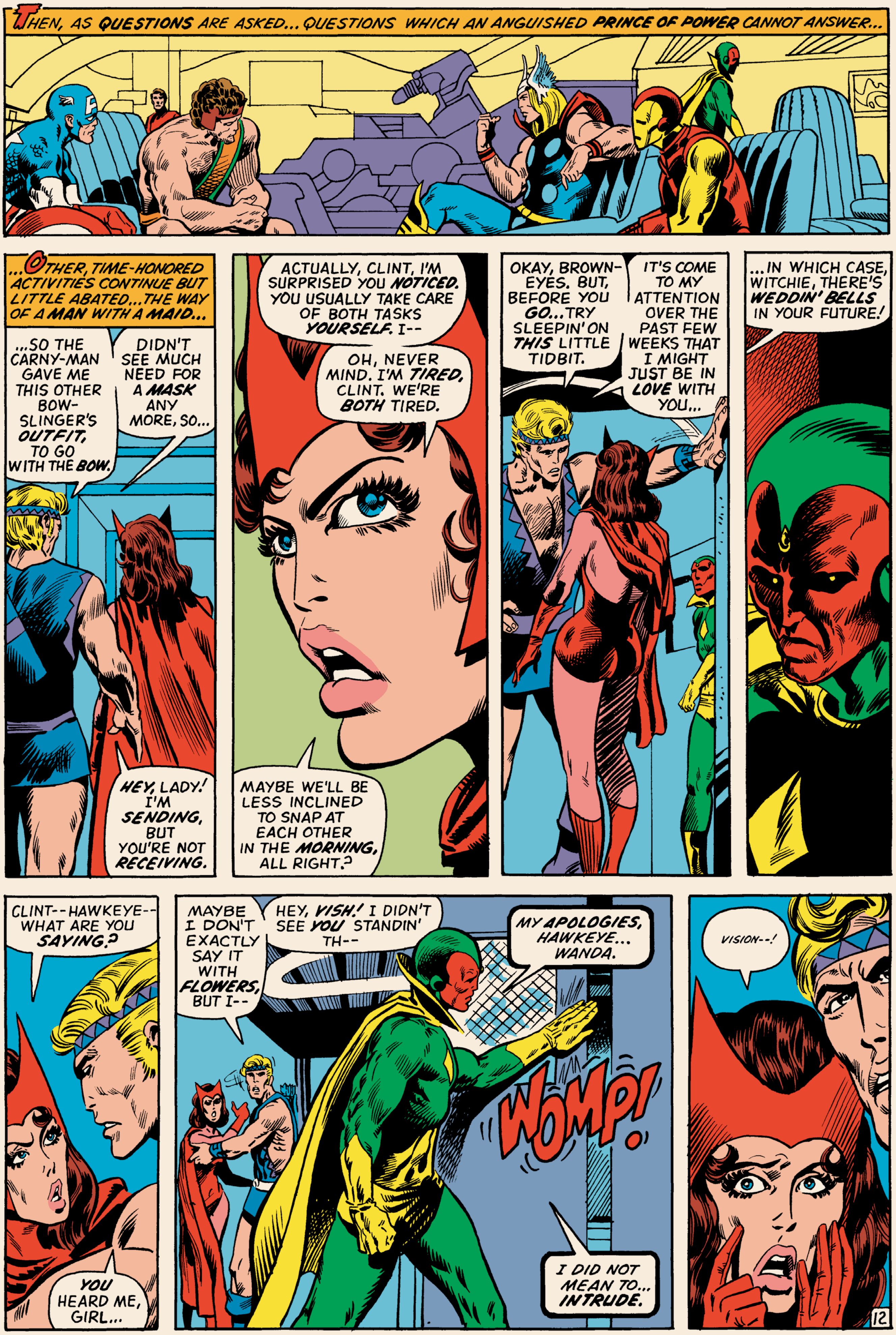

OUR SHOW **ONCE** HAD AN ARCHER. HE LEFT US HURRIEDLY, WITH CERTAIN **FUNDS.**
HE DID, HOWEVER, LEAVE US THESE **PERSONAL** EFFECTS.
ALL **RIGHT!** I'D BE HARD-PUT TO PROVE I'M A **RETIRED GIANT...**
BUT, MAYBE I **CAN** CONVINCE YOU...AND **MYSELF...**
...THAT...
...I USED TO SLING...
CHTIKK!
...A MEAN **BOW!**
BRAVO, SIR! WE ARE MOST **DEFINITELY** CONVINCED.
IF OUR **FORMER** ARCHER HAD POSSESSED YOUR SKILL, WE'D NOT HAVE DARED **DENY** HIM THE FUNDS HE COVETED.
IT WUZ NUTHIN'.
PLUS, M'SIEUR... **PLUS!**
HMMM. BY **"PLOO,"** I TAKE IT FRENCHIE MEANS HE WANTS **MORE.**
WELL, LET'S SEE HOW HE DIGS...
...THIS!!
SACRE BLEU!
CAR
THANKS, ONE AND ALL. INCIDENTALLY, I WASN'T JUST DOING THAT BY WAY OF **EGO-TRIPPING.**
I COULD USE A **LIFT** TO THE NEXT BIG TOWN, AND I LEFT MY **CREDIT-CARDS** IN MY OTHER SUIT, SO--
SAY NO MORE, FRIEND HAWKEYE.
YOU CAN PAY YOUR WAY WITH EXHIBITIONS OF YOUR **ARCHERY...**
...AFTER YOU HELP US FIX THAT SPLINTERED **WHEEL,** EH?
7.

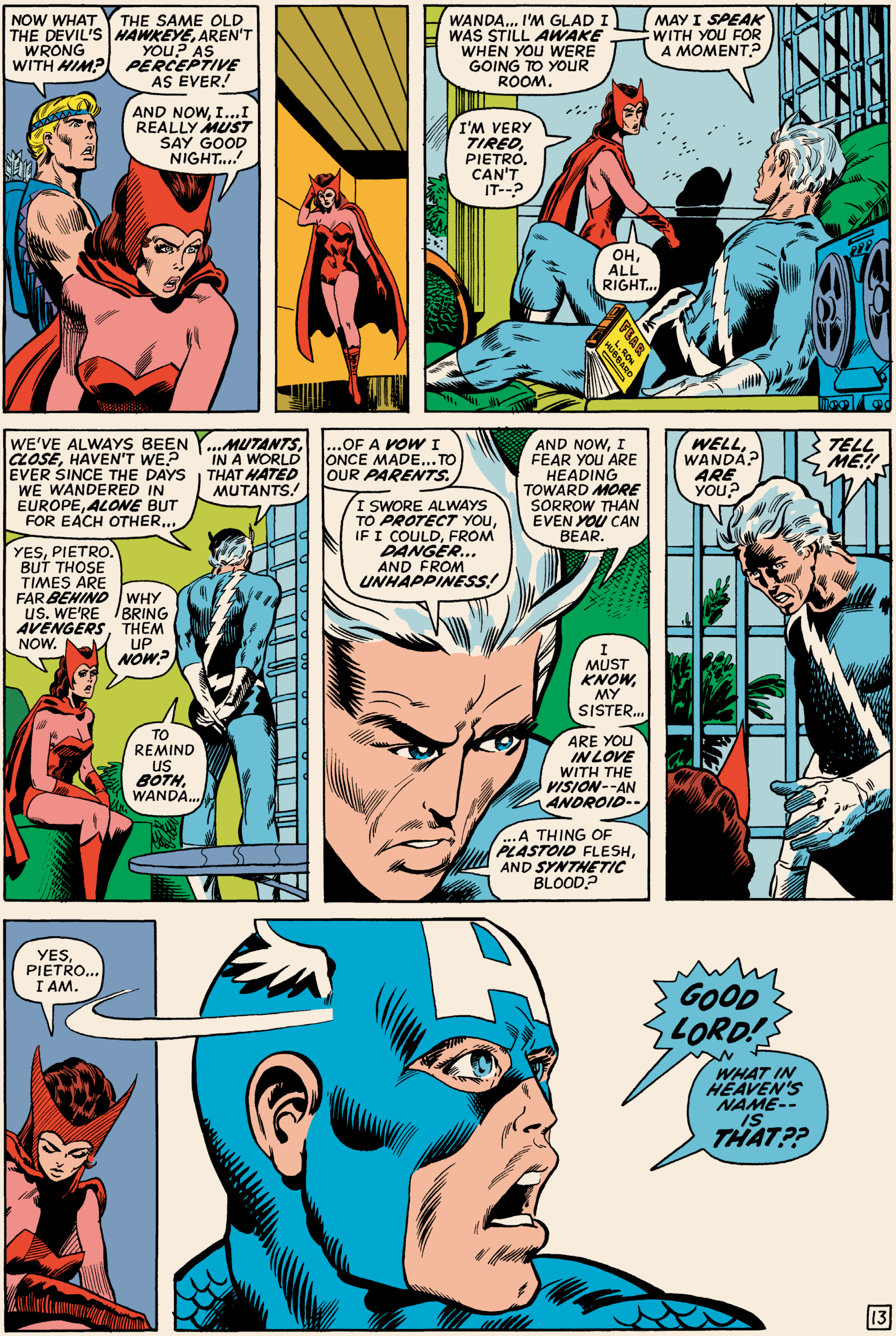

"WISH I COULD SAY I SPENT ALL NIGHT WORRYIN' ABOUT WHETHER **YOU GUYS** MADE IT BACK FROM **SKRULLSVILLE**...
"BUT IT **STORMED** THAT NIGHT ON THE ROAD TO BELGRADE...
"...SO I WAS BUSY BEIN'...
...**SEA-SICK!** OR MOTION-SICK...OR **WHATEVER** THE DEVIL I AM!
THE WAY MY **GUT** FEELS JUST NOW... I WISH I WUZ **DEAD.**
"AN' SONUVAGUN, WOULDN'T YOU JUST **KNOW** IT--ABOUT A SPLIT SECOND **LATER...**
"...I NEARLY **WAS!**
DO NOT MOVE, MY FRIEND!
THE RAVINE BELOW IS **DEEP**--YOUR WAGON PRECARIOUSLY **BALANCED.**
NO ONE BUT **HERCULES** CAN SAVE YOU NOW!
"FUNNY WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR **MIND** WHEN YOU THINK YER GONNA **DIE....!**
"THE ONLY WORD I **HEARD** THEN OF ALL THAT MISH-MASH WAS...
"**HERCULES**"?
"I DON'T KNOW WHO I **EXPECTED** TO SEE COME STEPPIN' UP TO THE EDGE... BUT I **WASN'T** READY FOR SOME CLOWN RIGHT OUT OF AN **ASTROLOGY GUIDE....!**
HERCULES--I DO NOT KNOW IF EVEN **YOUR** GREAT STRENGTH CAN HOLD THE WAGON LONG ENOUGH FOR THE AMERICAN TO **JUMP FREE.**
BUT, IF YOU COULD ONLY **TRY--!**
I **SHALL** TRY...
...AND I SHALL **SUCCEED!**
HEY--GET BACK! YOU WANNA GET YERSELF **KILLED?**
IT'D TAKE THE **REAL** HERCULES--
8.

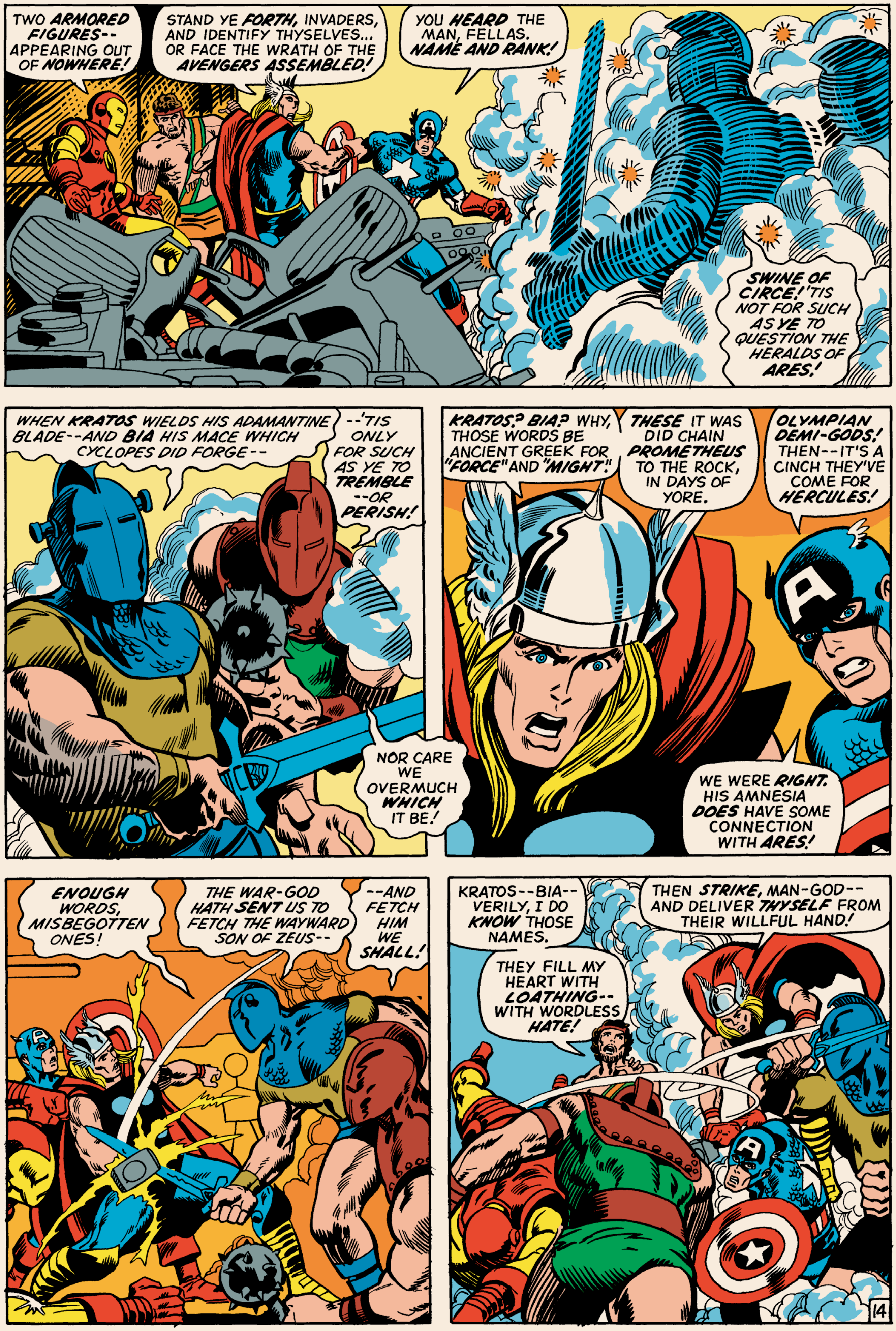

--TO GET ME OUTTA--
--HERE.
HOLY CROW!
"I'VE HEARD IT SAID I AINT THE SMARTEST AVENGER EVER CAME DOWN THE CHUTE...
"BUT A WALL DIDN'T HAVE TO FALL ON ME TWICE FOR ME TO FIGURE OUT...
"...THAT EITHER I WAS DREAMIN', OR DELIRIOUS, OR ELSE...
YOU ARE HERCULES! UNDER ALL THAT GUNK--YOU GOTTA BE THE REAL McCOY!
BUT, THAT AINT POSSIBLE! IT--
YOU SEEM HYSTERICAL, MY FRIEND. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M JUST DANDY. BUT, YOU GOTTA TELL ME...
WHO IN BLAZES IS THAT??
HE LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY I USED TO KNOW--BUT THAT GET-UP--THAT HAIR--
--IS MERELY A WIG. REMOVE IT, HERCULES!
GOOD GRAVY! IT IS HIM! HERCULES!
DON'T YOU KNOW ME, HERC.? IT'S ME--HAWKEYE--OF THE AVENGERS!
HAWKEYE? AVENGERS? THE NAMES SEEM--FAMILIAR--
BUT--I DO NOT KNOW--
PERHAPS I SHOULD EXPLAIN, FRIEND HAWKEYE...!
9.

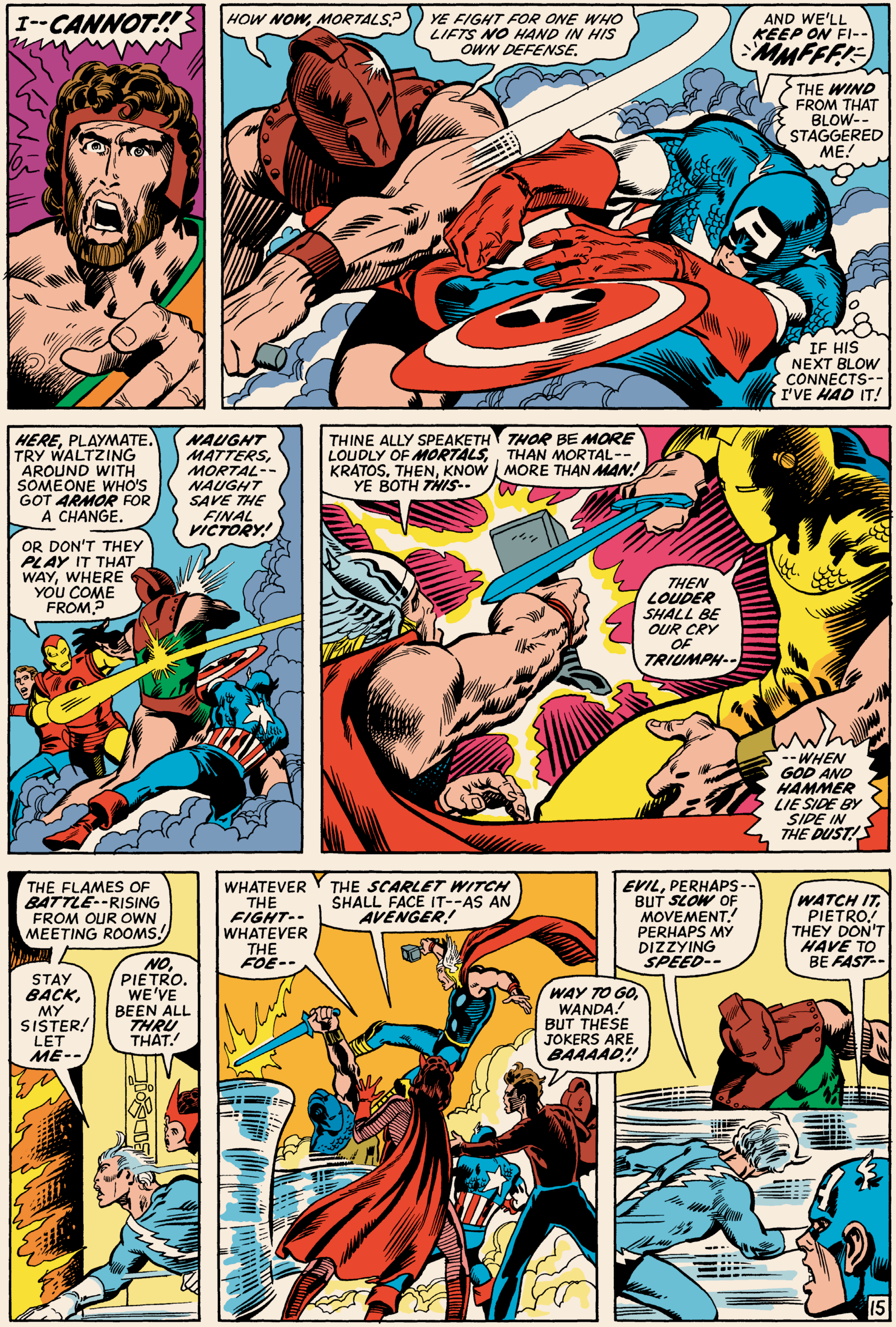

"THAT'S WHEN RUDOLFO TOLD ME ABOUT THE MAN THEY'D FOUND SITTING ALONE IN SOME RUINS, SOMEWHERE IN THE HILLS OF GREECE...!
HO THERE, FELLOW!
COULD YOU TELL ME IF THIS IS THE ROAD TO--?
"I GUESS HIS VOICE SCARED HERC...
"AN' HERC QUICKLY RETURNED THE FAVOR!
"OL' RUDY HAD A WINNIN' WAY, THOUGH, AND IN A MINUTE...
YOU ARE... FRIENDS. I WILL GO WITH YOU.
YOU'LL HAVE A HOME WITH US AS LONG AS YOU LIKE, SIR.
"WANNA HEAR A REAL GRABBER, PEOPLE? THE BIG FELLA DIDN'T KNOW SO MUCH AS HIS NAME, SO IT WAS RUDOLFO WHO DECIDED TO CALL HIM...HERCULES!
"'COURSE, NOW THAT I THINK OF IT...
"WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU CALL A GUY YOU FOUND IN GREECE, HOLDIN' A MARBLE PILLAR OVER HIS HEAD?
"ANYWAY, SOON AS WE HIT BELGRADE, I HIT ME A PAY PHONE...
NO ANSWER AT AVENGERS MANSION, HUH?
WELL THEN, I'LL JUST HAVETA HOPE TONY STARK'S IN THE MOOD TO ACCEPT A COLLECT CALL.*
*EVEN HAWKEYE DOESN'T KNOW TONY STARK DOUBLES AS IRON MAN. -- STAN.
OTHERWISE, IT'S BACK ON THE SAWDUST TRAIL FOR YOURS TRULY AND AN HONEST-TO-OLYMPUS GREEK GOD! I--
H'LO, TONY? OH-- KEVIN O'BRIEN-- IT'S YOU!
THIS IS HAWKEYE... CLINT BARTON... GOLIATH... TAKE YER PICK.
SURE AN' I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, MR. BARTON.
I'VE STANDIN' ORDERS TO DO ANYTHING I CAN IF ANY AVENGER EVER--
BZZZ BZZZ
FAITH! THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD'S CALLIN' ME.
BUT I'LL BE PUTTIN' ON SOMEONE ELSE CAN HELP YE...!
"O'BRIEN WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD-- FOR THE LAST TIME, FROM WHAT IRON MAN TELLS ME.*
"A FEW HOURS LATER, I WAS WINGIN' MY WAY BACK TO THE U.S. OF A. ...
*KEVIN O'BRIEN WAS SLAIN IN ACTION IN IRON MAN #46, NOW ON SALE! --S.
10.

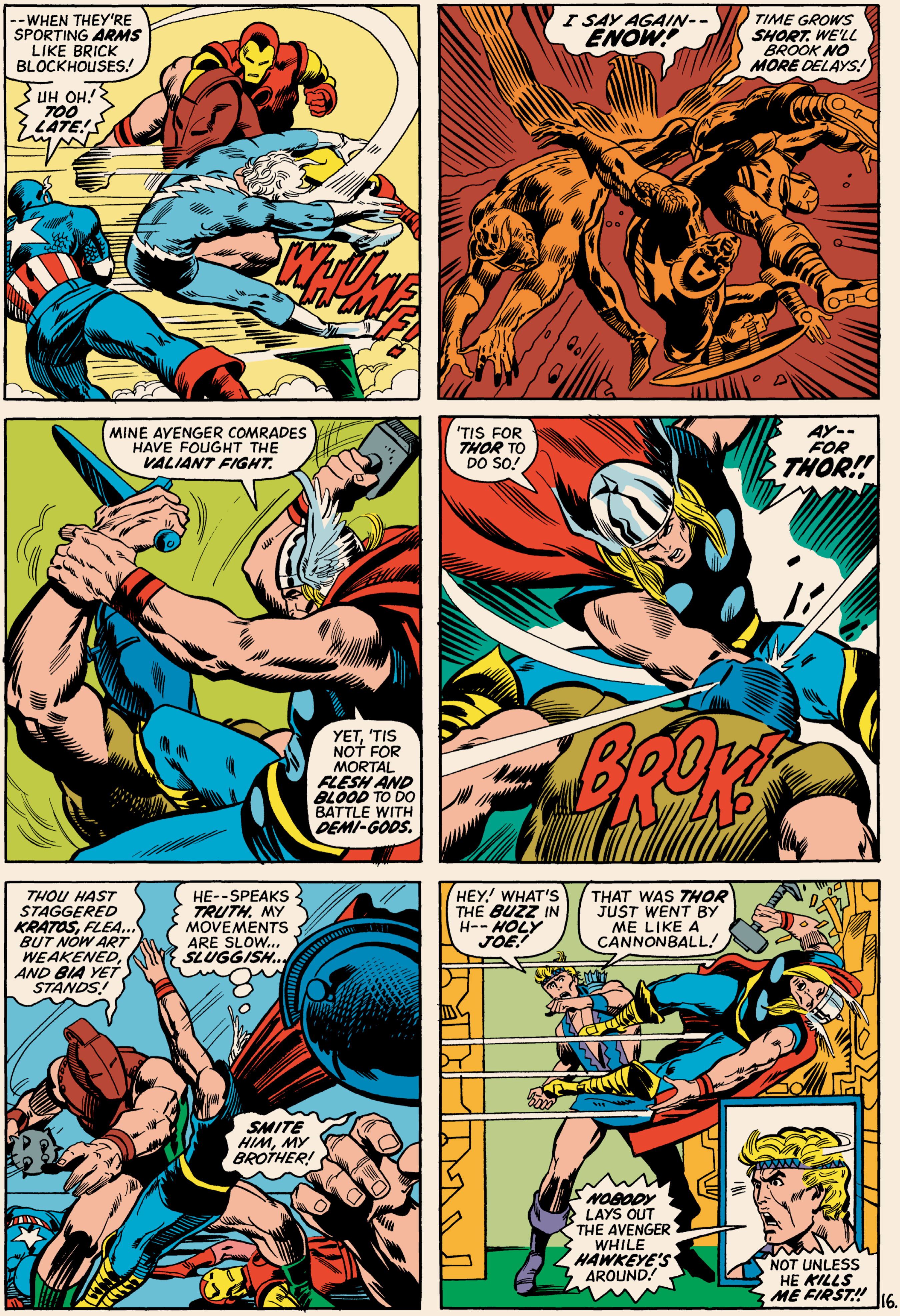

...AN' NOW YOU GUYS KNOW AS MUCH AS I DO.
IF ONLY KEVIN HADN'T ANSWERED THAT LAST SUMMONS, HE MIGHT BE ALIVE RIGHT NOW.
AY, AVENGER. WE SORROW WITH THEE FOR THE SOUL OF THY DEPARTED FRIEND.
YET, 'TIS ALL BUT CERTAIN THAT THE DOOM OF WORLDS LIES SEALED BEHIND THE LIPS OF YON OLYMPIAN.
WE MUST NOT YIELD TO PRIVATE GRIEFS, WHILST EARTH AND ASGARD HANG IN THE BALANCE.
AGREED. MAYBE IF WE QUIZZED HERCULES AGAIN...
DO YOUR WORST, CHUMS. I'M GETTIN' SOME SHUTEYE.
MMMM...OL' WANDA'S AS FINE AS EVER. I ALWAYS KINDA DUG HER...
BUT THAT SPEEDY-GONZALEZ BROTHER OF HERS HAS GOT A CHAPERONE COMPLEX.
AND, EVEN IF PIETRO STOOD ASIDE, HAWKEYE, YOUR FLEETING PASSION WOULD BE AS NOTHING...
...BESIDE THE UNVOICED FEELINGS OF ONE WHO DARES NOT HOPE THAT EVEN A MUTANT MAY LOVE ...AN ANDROID.
THE VISION HERE, CALLING THE LAND OF THE WAKANDAS...
COME IN, T'CHALLA...
T'CHALLA HERE, VISION. I'VE PONDERED THE AMNESIA PROBLEM YOU POSED ME EARLIER...
BUT I'VE STILL FOUND NO CURE LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE FOR... A GOD.
STILL, I'LL KEEP TRYING.
OUR THANKS. BUT PLEASE KEEP THIS CHANNEL OPEN.
WE MAY NEED TO CONTACT YOU AGAIN... QUICKLY.
VISION, THE WAY YOU SAID THAT...
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHIN' THE REST OF THE AVENGERS DON'T?
IF I WERE A MAN OF FLESH AND BLOOD, RICK JONES, I WOULD CALL WHAT I FEEL... A HUNCH.
AS IT IS, I MERELY--
HOLD! I'VE REACHED HENRY PYM-- BUT THE IMAGE IS BLURRED...
JUST SOME EXPERIMENTS OF MY OWN, AVENGER.
NOTHING LIKELY TO SHOCK HERCULES OUT OF HIS TRANCE, THOUGH.
YOU'LL NEED MORE THAN AN ANT-MAN TO HELP YOU THERE.
OVER... AND OUT.
11

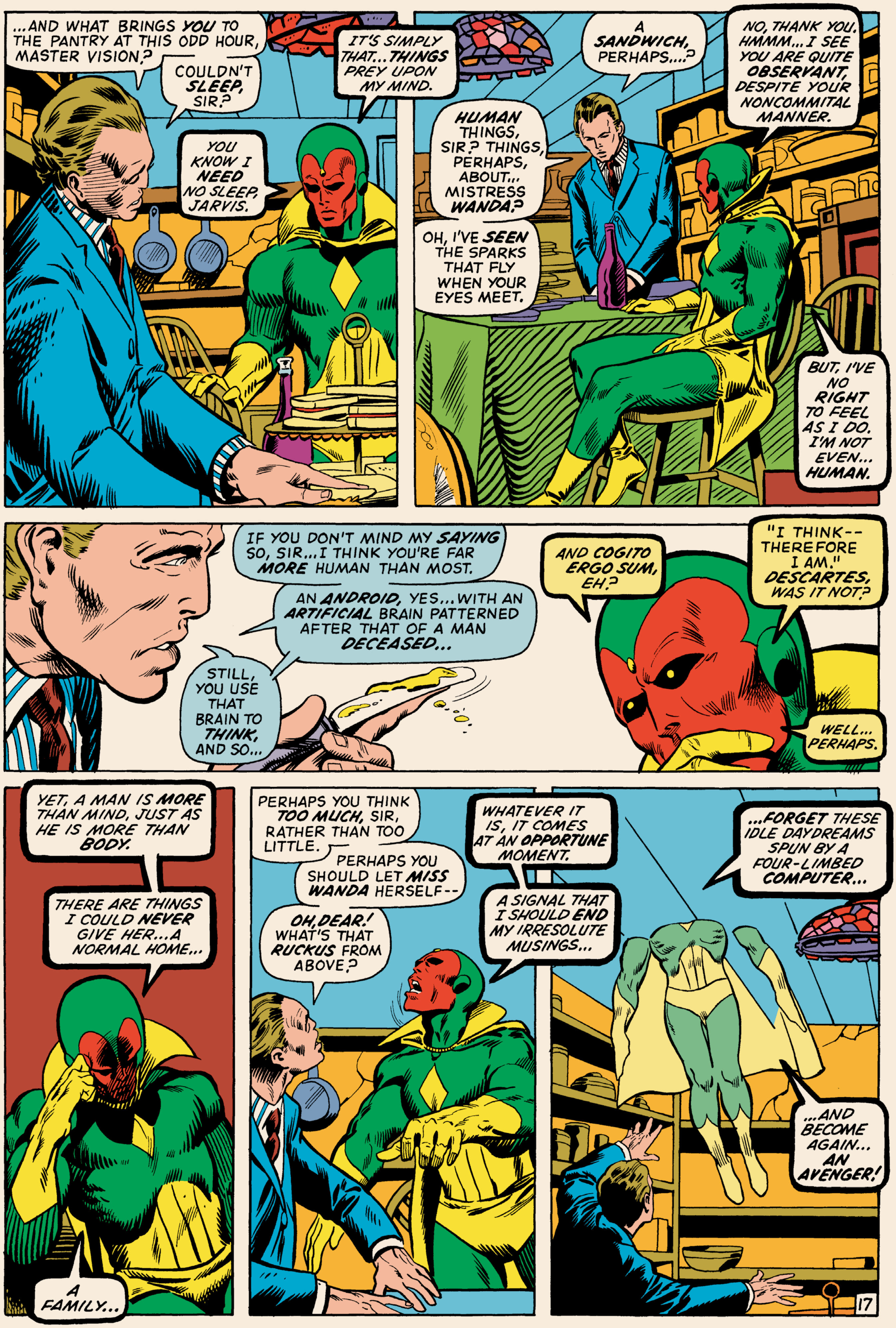

THEN, AS QUESTIONS ARE ASKED... QUESTIONS WHICH AN ANGUISHED PRINCE OF POWER CANNOT ANSWER...
...OTHER, TIME-HONORED ACTIVITIES CONTINUE BUT LITTLE ABATED... THE WAY OF A MAN WITH A MAID...
...SO THE CARNY-MAN GAVE ME THIS OTHER BOW-SLINGER'S OUTFIT, TO GO WITH THE BOW.
DIDN'T SEE MUCH NEED FOR A MASK ANY MORE, SO...
HEY, LADY! I'M SENDING, BUT YOU'RE NOT RECEIVING.
ACTUALLY, CLINT, I'M SURPRISED YOU NOTICED. YOU USUALLY TAKE CARE OF BOTH TASKS YOURSELF. I--
OH, NEVER MIND. I'M TIRED, CLINT. WE'RE BOTH TIRED.
MAYBE WE'LL BE LESS INCLINED TO SNAP AT EACH OTHER IN THE MORNING, ALL RIGHT?
OKAY, BROWN-EYES. BUT, BEFORE YOU GO... TRY SLEEPIN' ON THIS LITTLE TIDBIT.
IT'S COME TO MY ATTENTION OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS THAT I MIGHT JUST BE IN LOVE WITH YOU...
...IN WHICH CASE, WITCHIE, THERE'S WEDDIN' BELLS IN YOUR FUTURE!
CLINT--HAWKEYE--WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
YOU HEARD ME, GIRL...
MAYBE I DON'T EXACTLY SAY IT WITH FLOWERS, BUT I--
HEY, VISH! I DIDN'T SEE YOU STANDIN' TH--
MY APOLOGIES, HAWKEYE... WANDA.
WOMP!
I DID NOT MEAN TO... INTRUDE.
VISION--!
12

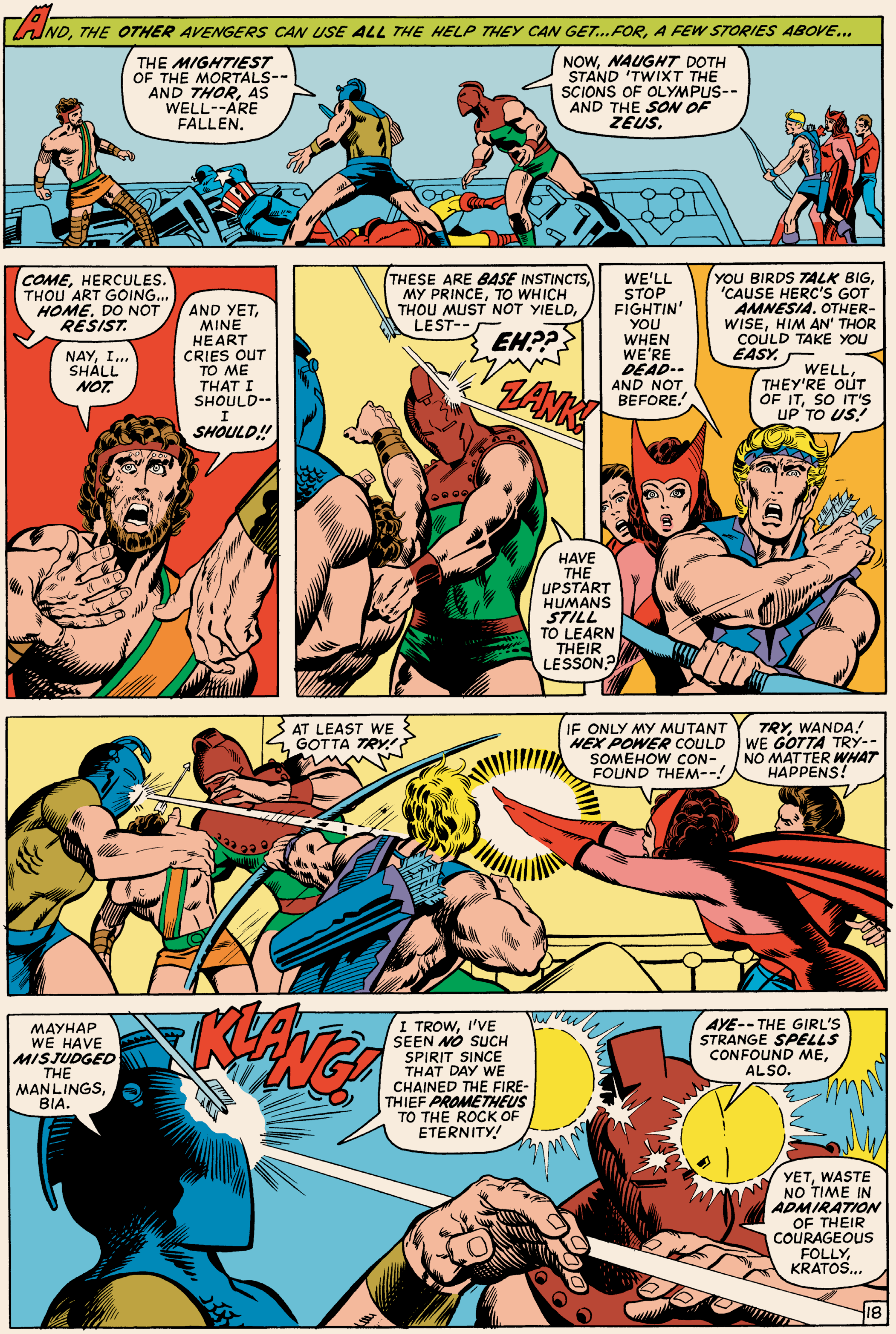

NOW WHAT THE DEVIL'S WRONG WITH HIM?
THE SAME OLD HAWKEYE, AREN'T YOU? AS PERCEPTIVE AS EVER!
AND NOW, I...I REALLY MUST SAY GOOD NIGHT...!
WANDA... I'M GLAD I WAS STILL AWAKE WHEN YOU WERE GOING TO YOUR ROOM.
MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU FOR A MOMENT?
I'M VERY TIRED, PIETRO. CAN'T IT--?
OH, ALL RIGHT...
FEAR L. RON HUBBARD
WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN CLOSE, HAVEN'T WE? EVER SINCE THE DAYS WE WANDERED IN EUROPE, ALONE BUT FOR EACH OTHER...
...MUTANTS, IN A WORLD THAT HATED MUTANTS!
YES, PIETRO. BUT THOSE TIMES ARE FAR BEHIND US. WE'RE AVENGERS NOW.
WHY BRING THEM UP NOW?
TO REMIND US BOTH, WANDA...
...OF A VOW I ONCE MADE...TO OUR PARENTS.
I SWORE ALWAYS TO PROTECT YOU, IF I COULD, FROM DANGER... AND FROM UNHAPPINESS!
AND NOW, I FEAR YOU ARE HEADING TOWARD MORE SORROW THAN EVEN YOU CAN BEAR.
I MUST KNOW, MY SISTER...
ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH THE VISION--AN ANDROID--
...A THING OF PLASTOID FLESH, AND SYNTHETIC BLOOD?
WELL, WANDA? ARE YOU?
TELL ME!!
YES, PIETRO... I AM.
GOOD LORD!
WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME--IS THAT??
13

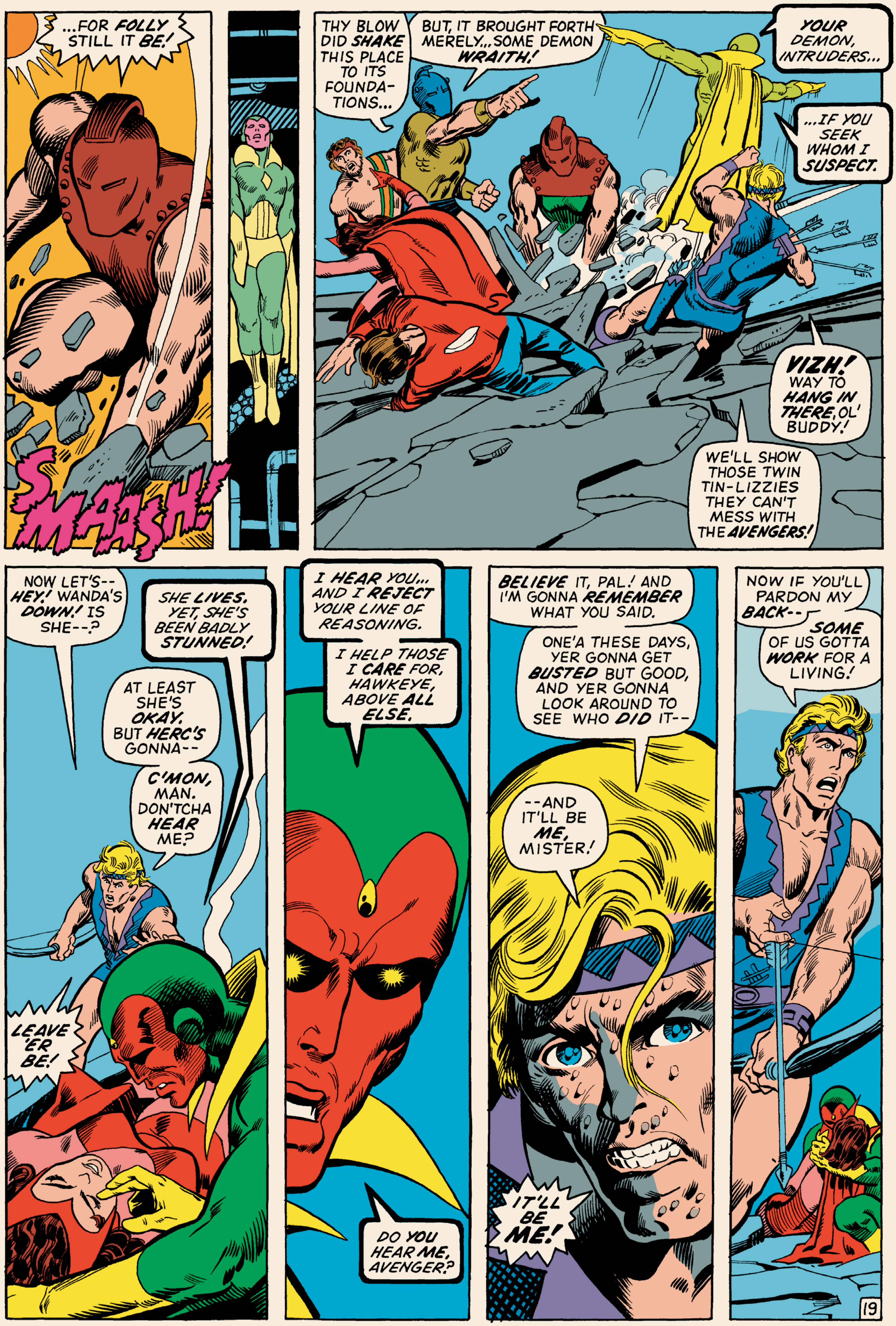

TWO ARMORED FIGURES-- APPEARING OUT OF NOWHERE!
STAND YE FORTH, INVADERS, AND IDENTIFY THYSELVES... OR FACE THE WRATH OF THE AVENGERS ASSEMBLED!
YOU HEARD THE MAN, FELLAS. NAME AND RANK!
SWINE OF CIRCE! 'TIS NOT FOR SUCH AS YE TO QUESTION THE HERALDS OF ARES!
WHEN KRATOS WIELDS HIS ADAMANTINE BLADE--AND BIA HIS MACE WHICH CYCLOPES DID FORGE--
--'TIS ONLY FOR SUCH AS YE TO TREMBLE --OR PERISH!
NOR CARE WE OVERMUCH WHICH IT BE!
KRATOS? BIA? WHY, THOSE WORDS BE ANCIENT GREEK FOR "FORCE" AND "MIGHT"!
THESE IT WAS DID CHAIN PROMETHEUS TO THE ROCK, IN DAYS OF YORE.
OLYMPIAN DEMI-GODS! THEN--IT'S A CINCH THEY'VE COME FOR HERCULES!
WE WERE RIGHT. HIS AMNESIA DOES HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH ARES!
ENOUGH WORDS, MISBEGOTTEN ONES!
THE WAR-GOD HATH SENT US TO FETCH THE WAYWARD SON OF ZEUS--
--AND FETCH HIM WE SHALL!
KRATOS--BIA-- VERILY, I DO KNOW THOSE NAMES.
THEY FILL MY HEART WITH LOATHING-- WITH WORDLESS HATE!
THEN STRIKE, MAN-GOD-- AND DELIVER THYSELF FROM THEIR WILLFUL HAND!
14

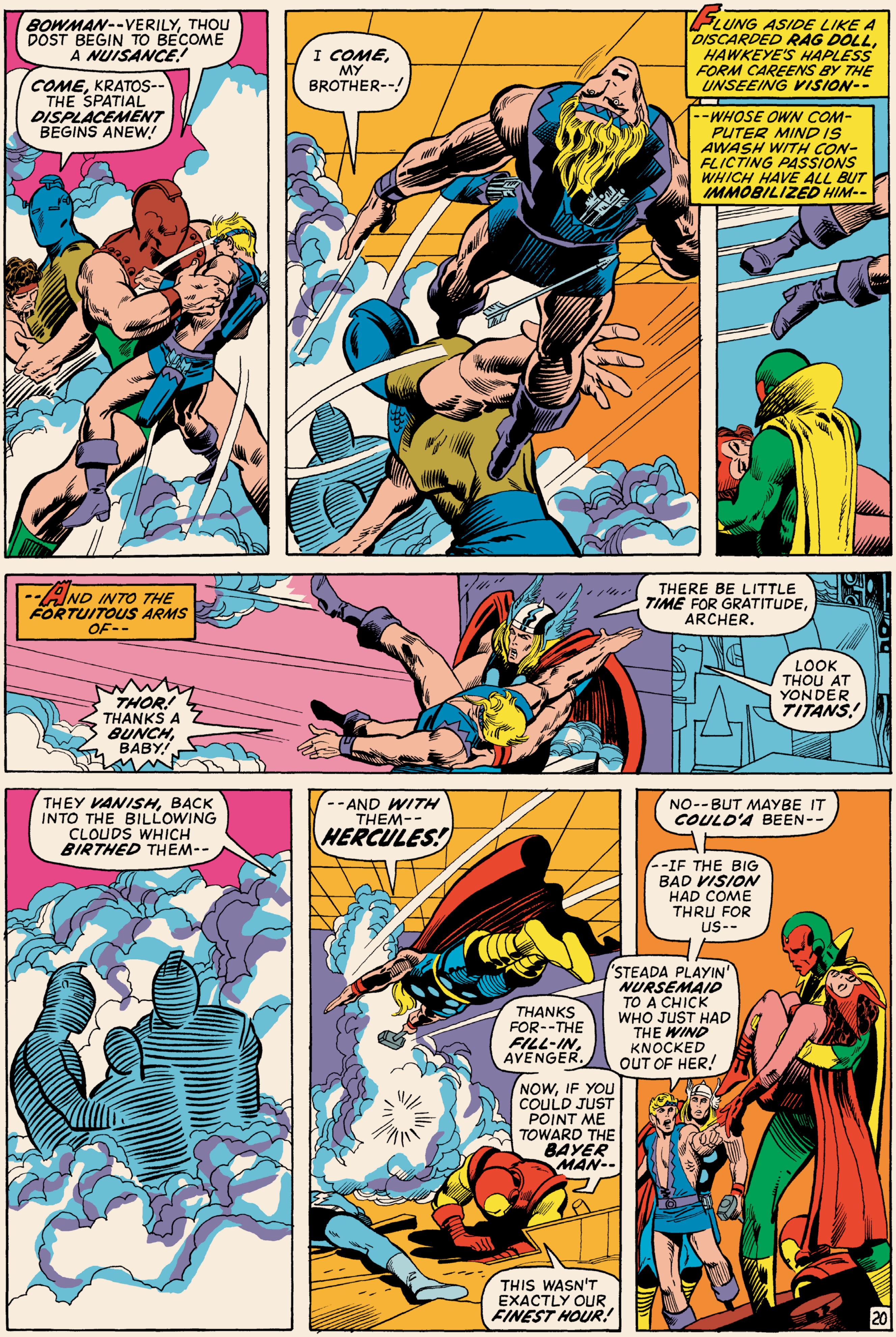

I--CANNOT!!
HOW NOW, MORTALS?
YE FIGHT FOR ONE WHO LIFTS NO HAND IN HIS OWN DEFENSE.
AND WE'LL KEEP ON FI-- MMFFF!
THE WIND FROM THAT BLOW-- STAGGERED ME!
IF HIS NEXT BLOW CONNECTS-- I'VE HAD IT!
HERE, PLAYMATE. TRY WALTZING AROUND WITH SOMEONE WHO'S GOT ARMOR FOR A CHANGE.
OR DON'T THEY PLAY IT THAT WAY, WHERE YOU COME FROM?
NAUGHT MATTERS, MORTAL-- NAUGHT SAVE THE FINAL VICTORY!
THINE ALLY SPEAKETH LOUDLY OF MORTALS, KRATOS. THEN, KNOW YE BOTH THIS--
THOR BE MORE THAN MORTAL-- MORE THAN MAN!
THEN LOUDER SHALL BE OUR CRY OF TRIUMPH--
--WHEN GOD AND HAMMER LIE SIDE BY SIDE IN THE DUST!
THE FLAMES OF BATTLE--RISING FROM OUR OWN MEETING ROOMS!
STAY BACK, MY SISTER! LET ME--
NO, PIETRO. WE'VE BEEN ALL THRU THAT!
WHATEVER THE FIGHT-- WHATEVER THE FOE--
THE SCARLET WITCH SHALL FACE IT--AS AN AVENGER!
WAY TO GO, WANDA! BUT THESE JOKERS ARE BAAAAD!!
EVIL, PERHAPS-- BUT SLOW OF MOVEMENT! PERHAPS MY DIZZYING SPEED--
WATCH IT, PIETRO! THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE FAST--
15

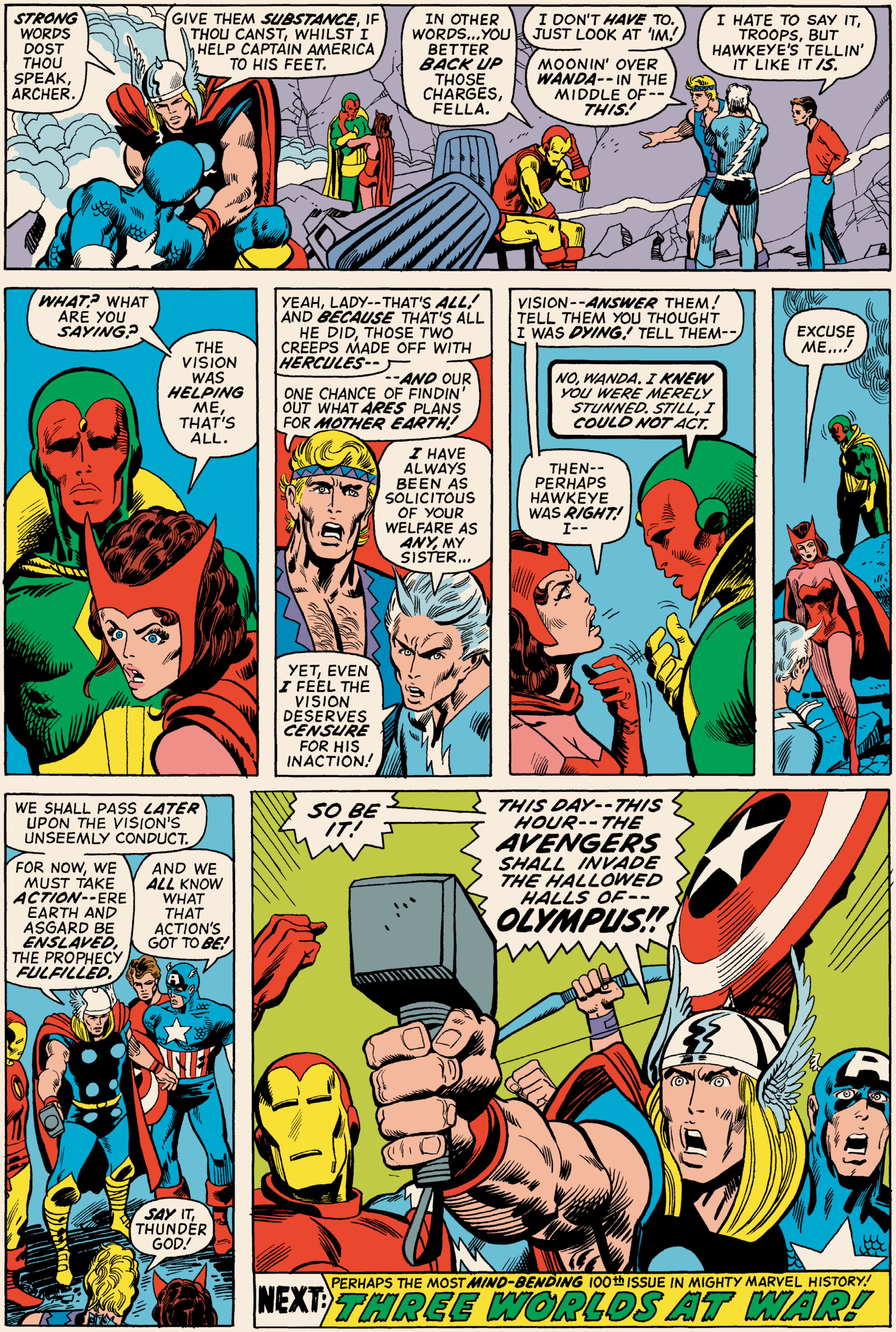

--WHEN THEY'RE SPORTING ARMS LIKE BRICK BLOCKHOUSES!
UH OH! TOO LATE!
WHUMFF!
I SAY AGAIN-- ENOW!
TIME GROWS SHORT. WE'LL BROOK NO MORE DELAYS!
MINE AVENGER COMRADES HAVE FOUGHT THE VALIANT FIGHT.
YET, 'TIS NOT FOR MORTAL FLESH AND BLOOD TO DO BATTLE WITH DEMI-GODS.
'TIS FOR THOR TO DO SO!
AY-- FOR THOR!!
BROK!
THOU HAST STAGGERED KRATOS, FLEA... BUT NOW ART WEAKENED, AND BIA YET STANDS!
HE--SPEAKS TRUTH. MY MOVEMENTS ARE SLOW... SLUGGISH...
SMITE HIM, MY BROTHER!
HEY! WHAT'S THE BUZZ IN H--HOLY JOE!
THAT WAS THOR JUST WENT BY ME LIKE A CANNONBALL!
NOBODY LAYS OUT THE AVENGER WHILE HAWKEYE'S AROUND!
NOT UNLESS HE KILLS ME FIRST!!
16.

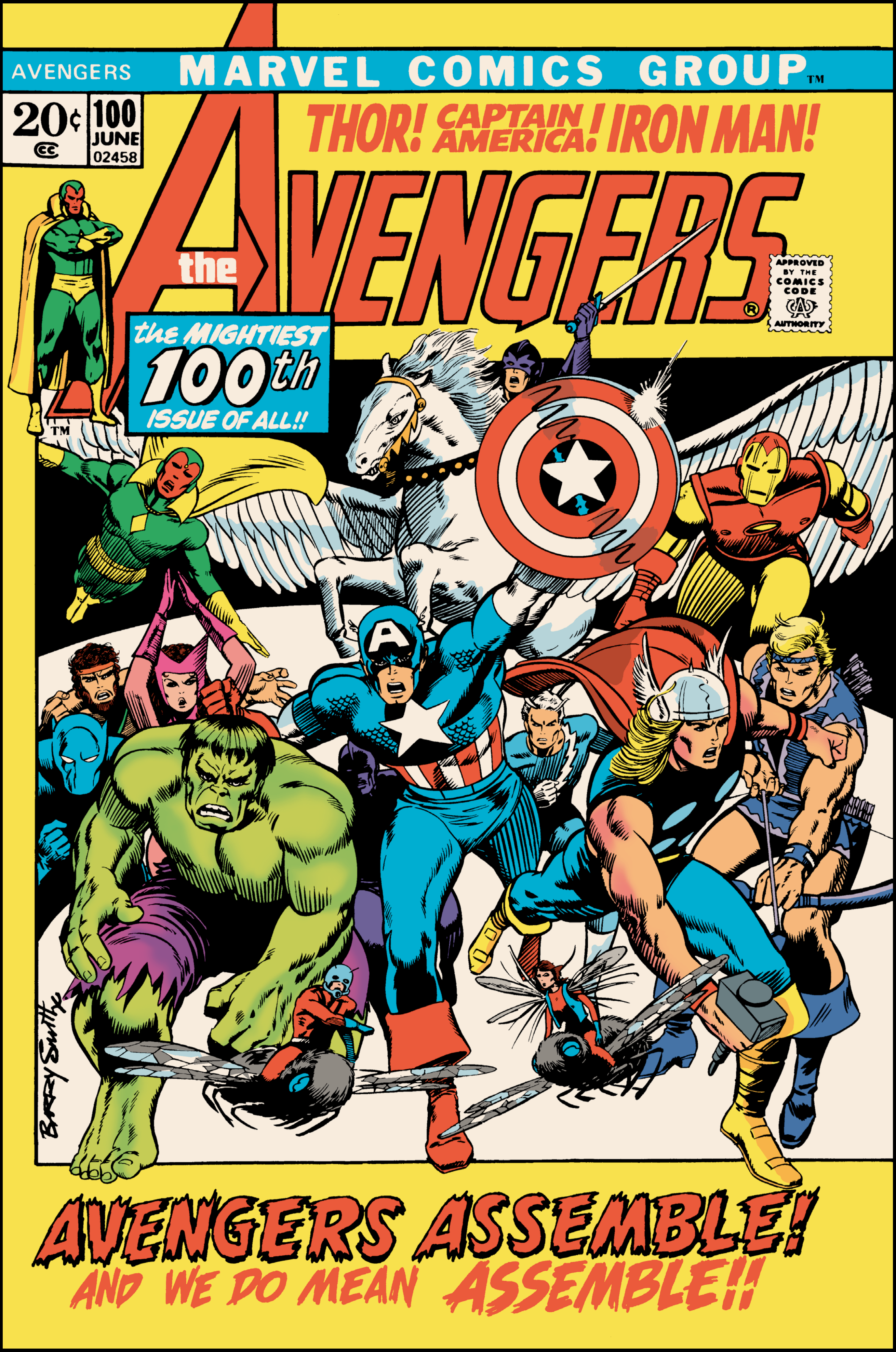

...AND WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE PANTRY AT THIS ODD HOUR, MASTER VISION?
COULDN'T SLEEP, SIR?
IT'S SIMPLY THAT... THINGS PREY UPON MY MIND.
YOU KNOW I NEED NO SLEEP, JARVIS.
A SANDWICH, PERHAPS...?
NO, THANK YOU. HMMM... I SEE YOU ARE QUITE OBSERVANT, DESPITE YOUR NONCOMMITAL MANNER.
HUMAN THINGS, SIR? THINGS, PERHAPS, ABOUT... MISTRESS WANDA?
OH, I'VE SEEN THE SPARKS THAT FLY WHEN YOUR EYES MEET.
BUT, I'VE NO RIGHT TO FEEL AS I DO. I'M NOT EVEN... HUMAN.
IF YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYING SO, SIR... I THINK YOU'RE FAR MORE HUMAN THAN MOST.
AN ANDROID, YES... WITH AN ARTIFICIAL BRAIN PATTERNED AFTER THAT OF A MAN DECEASED...
STILL, YOU USE THAT BRAIN TO THINK, AND SO...
AND COGITO ERGO SUM, EH?
"I THINK--THEREFORE I AM." DESCARTES, WAS IT NOT?
WELL... PERHAPS.
YET, A MAN IS MORE THAN MIND, JUST AS HE IS MORE THAN BODY.
THERE ARE THINGS I COULD NEVER GIVE HER... A NORMAL HOME...
A FAMILY...
PERHAPS YOU THINK TOO MUCH, SIR, RATHER THAN TOO LITTLE.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD LET MISS WANDA HERSELF--
OH, DEAR! WHAT'S THAT RUCKUS FROM ABOVE?
WHATEVER IT IS, IT COMES AT AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT.
A SIGNAL THAT I SHOULD END MY IRRESOLUTE MUSINGS...
...FORGET THESE IDLE DAYDREAMS SPUN BY A FOUR-LIMBED COMPUTER...
...AND BECOME AGAIN... AN AVENGER!
17


AND, THE OTHER AVENGERS CAN USE ALL THE HELP THEY CAN GET...FOR, A FEW STORIES ABOVE...
THE MIGHTIEST OF THE MORTALS-- AND THOR, AS WELL--ARE FALLEN.
NOW, NAUGHT DOTH STAND 'TWIXT THE SCIONS OF OLYMPUS-- AND THE SON OF ZEUS.
COME, HERCULES. THOU ART GOING... HOME. DO NOT RESIST.
NAY, I... SHALL NOT.
AND YET, MINE HEART CRIES OUT TO ME THAT I SHOULD-- I SHOULD!!
THESE ARE BASE INSTINCTS, MY PRINCE, TO WHICH THOU MUST NOT YIELD, LEST--
EH??
ZANK!
HAVE THE UPSTART HUMANS STILL TO LEARN THEIR LESSON?
WE'LL STOP FIGHTIN' YOU WHEN WE'RE DEAD-- AND NOT BEFORE!
YOU BIRDS TALK BIG, 'CAUSE HERC'S GOT AMNESIA. OTHERWISE, HIM AN' THOR COULD TAKE YOU EASY.
WELL, THEY'RE OUT OF IT, SO IT'S UP TO US!
AT LEAST WE GOTTA TRY!
IF ONLY MY MUTANT HEX POWER COULD SOMEHOW CONFOUND THEM--!
TRY, WANDA! WE GOTTA TRY-- NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS!
MAYHAP WE HAVE MISJUDGED THE MANLINGS, BIA.
KLANG!
I TROW, I'VE SEEN NO SUCH SPIRIT SINCE THAT DAY WE CHAINED THE FIRE-THIEF PROMETHEUS TO THE ROCK OF ETERNITY!
AYE--THE GIRL'S STRANGE SPELLS CONFOUND ME, ALSO.
YET, WASTE NO TIME IN ADMIRATION OF THEIR COURAGEOUS FOLLY, KRATOS...
18

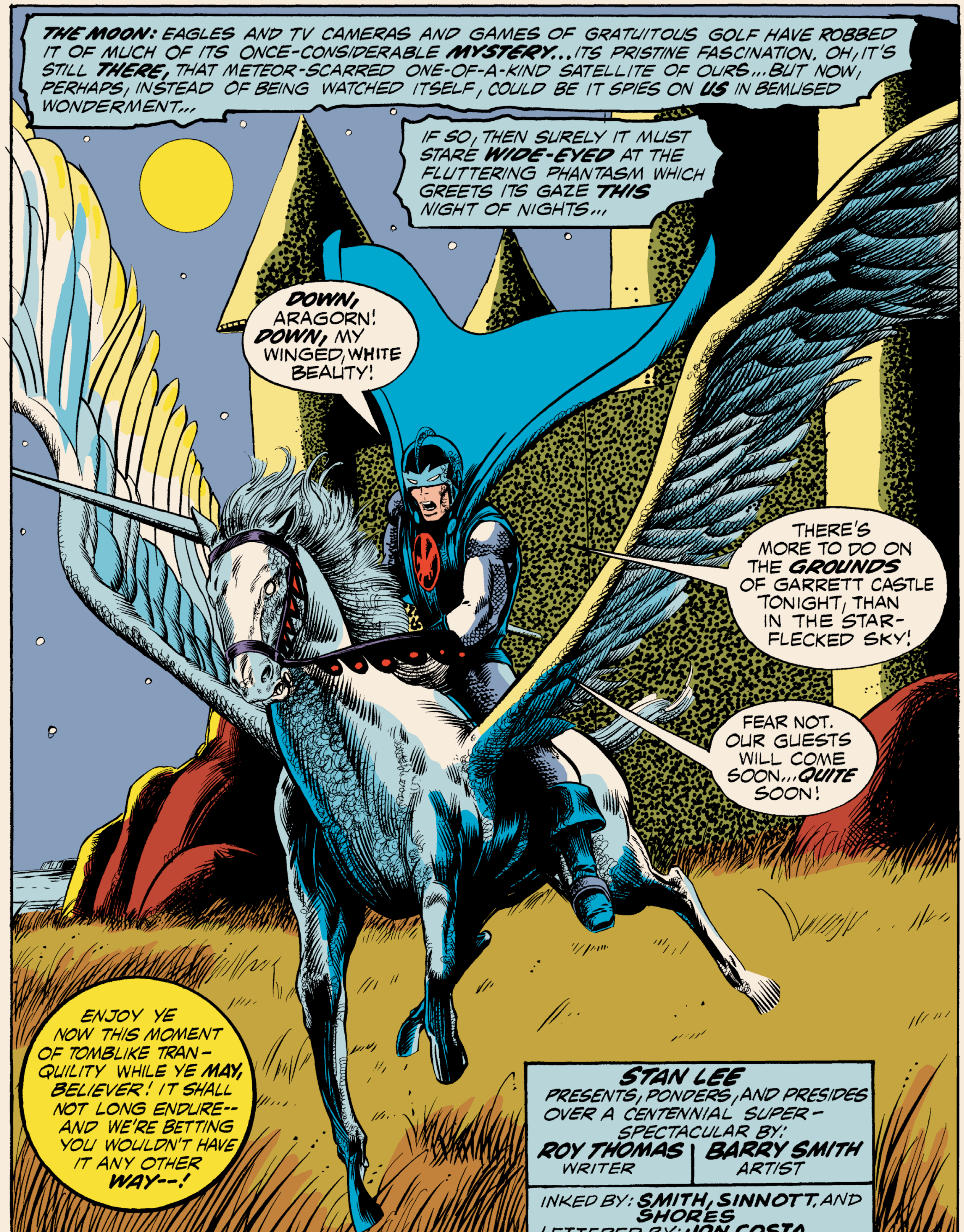

...FOR FOLLY STILL IT BE!
SMAASH!
THY BLOW DID SHAKE THIS PLACE TO ITS FOUNDATIONS...
BUT, IT BROUGHT FORTH MERELY...SOME DEMON WRAITH!
YOUR DEMON, INTRUDERS...
...IF YOU SEEK WHOM I SUSPECT.
VIZH! WAY TO HANG IN THERE, OL' BUDDY!
WE'LL SHOW THOSE TWIN TIN-LIZZIES THEY CAN'T MESS WITH THE AVENGERS!
NOW LET'S-- HEY! WANDA'S DOWN! IS SHE--?
SHE LIVES. YET, SHE'S BEEN BADLY STUNNED!
AT LEAST SHE'S OKAY. BUT HERC'S GONNA--
C'MON, MAN. DON'TCHA HEAR ME?
LEAVE 'ER BE!
I HEAR YOU... AND I REJECT YOUR LINE OF REASONING.
I HELP THOSE I CARE FOR, HAWKEYE, ABOVE ALL ELSE.
DO YOU HEAR ME, AVENGER?
BELIEVE IT, PAL! AND I'M GONNA REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID.
ONE'A THESE DAYS, YER GONNA GET BUSTED BUT GOOD, AND YER GONNA LOOK AROUND TO SEE WHO DID IT--
--AND IT'LL BE ME, MISTER!
IT'LL BE ME!
NOW IF YOU'LL PARDON MY BACK--
SOME OF US GOTTA WORK FOR A LIVING!
19

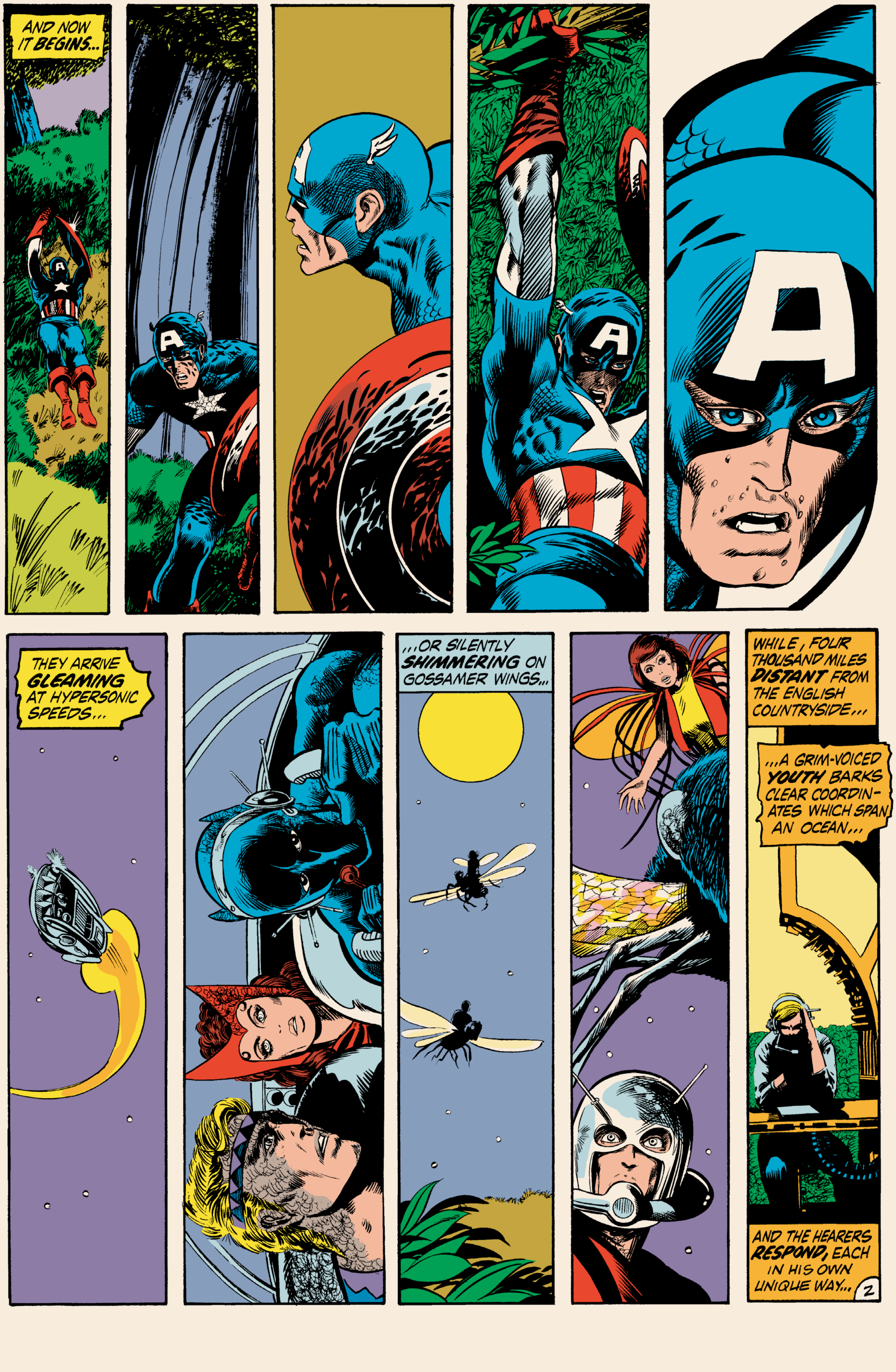

BOWMAN--VERILY, THOU DOST BEGIN TO BECOME A NUISANCE!
COME, KRATOS--THE SPATIAL DISPLACEMENT BEGINS ANEW!
I COME, MY BROTHER--!
FLUNG ASIDE LIKE A DISCARDED RAG DOLL, HAWKEYE'S HAPLESS FORM CAREENS BY THE UNSEEING VISION--
--WHOSE OWN COMPUTER MIND IS AWASH WITH CONFLICTING PASSIONS WHICH HAVE ALL BUT IMMOBILIZED HIM--
--AND INTO THE FORTUITOUS ARMS OF--
THOR! THANKS A BUNCH, BABY!
THERE BE LITTLE TIME FOR GRATITUDE, ARCHER.
LOOK THOU AT YONDER TITANS!
THEY VANISH, BACK INTO THE BILLOWING CLOUDS WHICH BIRTHED THEM--
--AND WITH THEM--HERCULES!
THANKS FOR--THE FILL-IN, AVENGER.
NOW, IF YOU COULD JUST POINT ME TOWARD THE BAYER MAN--
THIS WASN'T EXACTLY OUR FINEST HOUR!
NO--BUT MAYBE IT COULD'A BEEN--
--IF THE BIG BAD VISION HAD COME THRU FOR US--
'STEADA PLAYIN' NURSEMAID TO A CHICK WHO JUST HAD THE WIND KNOCKED OUT OF HER!
20

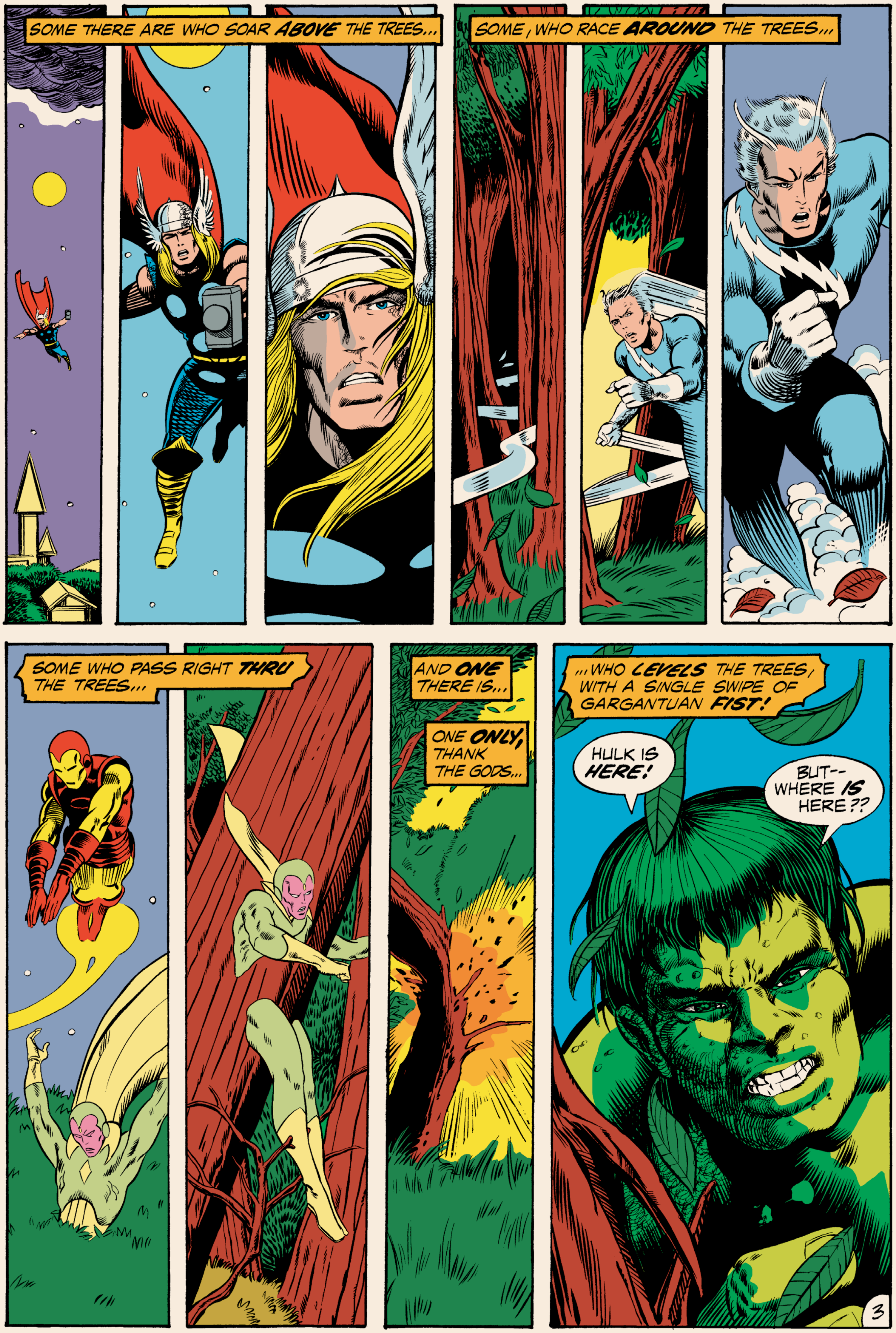

STRONG WORDS DOST THOU SPEAK, ARCHER.
GIVE THEM SUBSTANCE, IF THOU CANST, WHILST I HELP CAPTAIN AMERICA TO HIS FEET.
IN OTHER WORDS...YOU BETTER BACK UP THOSE CHARGES, FELLA.
I DON'T HAVE TO. JUST LOOK AT 'IM!
MOONIN' OVER WANDA--IN THE MIDDLE OF--THIS!
I HATE TO SAY IT, TROOPS, BUT HAWKEYE'S TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS.
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
THE VISION WAS HELPING ME, THAT'S ALL.
YEAH, LADY--THAT'S ALL! AND BECAUSE THAT'S ALL HE DID, THOSE TWO CREEPS MADE OFF WITH HERCULES--
--AND OUR ONE CHANCE OF FINDIN' OUT WHAT ARES PLANS FOR MOTHER EARTH!
I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AS SOLICITOUS OF YOUR WELFARE AS ANY, MY SISTER...
YET, EVEN I FEEL THE VISION DESERVES CENSURE FOR HIS INACTION!
VISION--ANSWER THEM! TELL THEM YOU THOUGHT I WAS DYING! TELL THEM--
NO, WANDA. I KNEW YOU WERE MERELY STUNNED. STILL, I COULD NOT ACT.
THEN--PERHAPS HAWKEYE WAS RIGHT! I--
EXCUSE ME...!
WE SHALL PASS LATER UPON THE VISION'S UNSEEMLY CONDUCT.
FOR NOW, WE MUST TAKE ACTION--ERE EARTH AND ASGARD BE ENSLAVED, THE PROPHECY FULFILLED.
AND WE ALL KNOW WHAT THAT ACTION'S GOT TO BE!
SAY IT, THUNDER GOD!
SO BE IT!
THIS DAY--THIS HOUR--THE AVENGERS SHALL INVADE THE HALLOWED HALLS OF--OLYMPUS!!
NEXT: PERHAPS THE MOST MIND-BENDING 100th ISSUE IN MIGHTY MARVEL HISTORY! THREE WORLDS AT WAR!

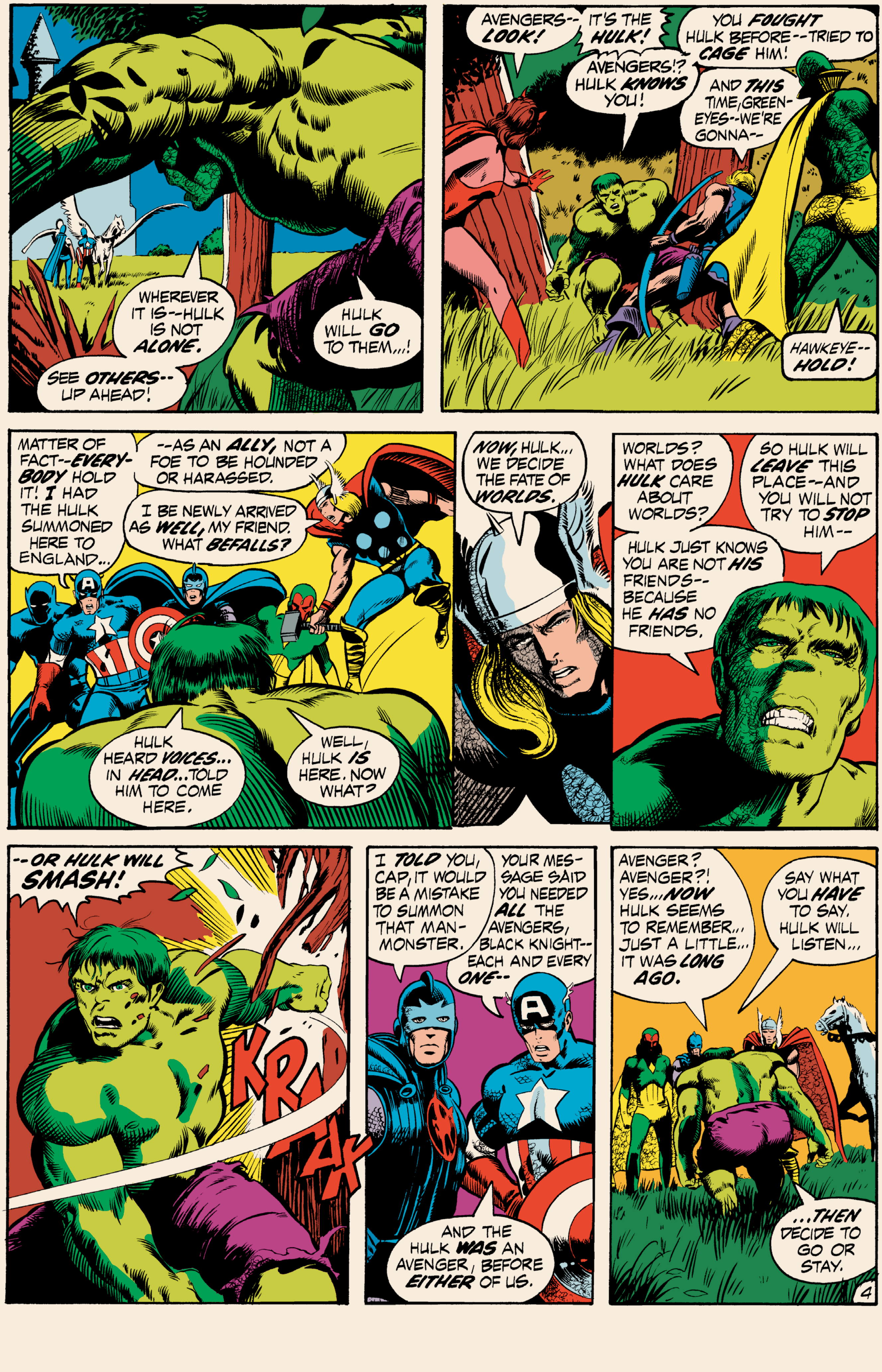

AVENGERS
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
20¢
100
JUNE
02458
THOR! CAPTAIN AMERICA! IRON MAN!
the AVENGERS®
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
the MIGHTIEST 100th ISSUE OF ALL!!
BARRY SMITH
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
AND WE DO MEAN ASSEMBLE!!

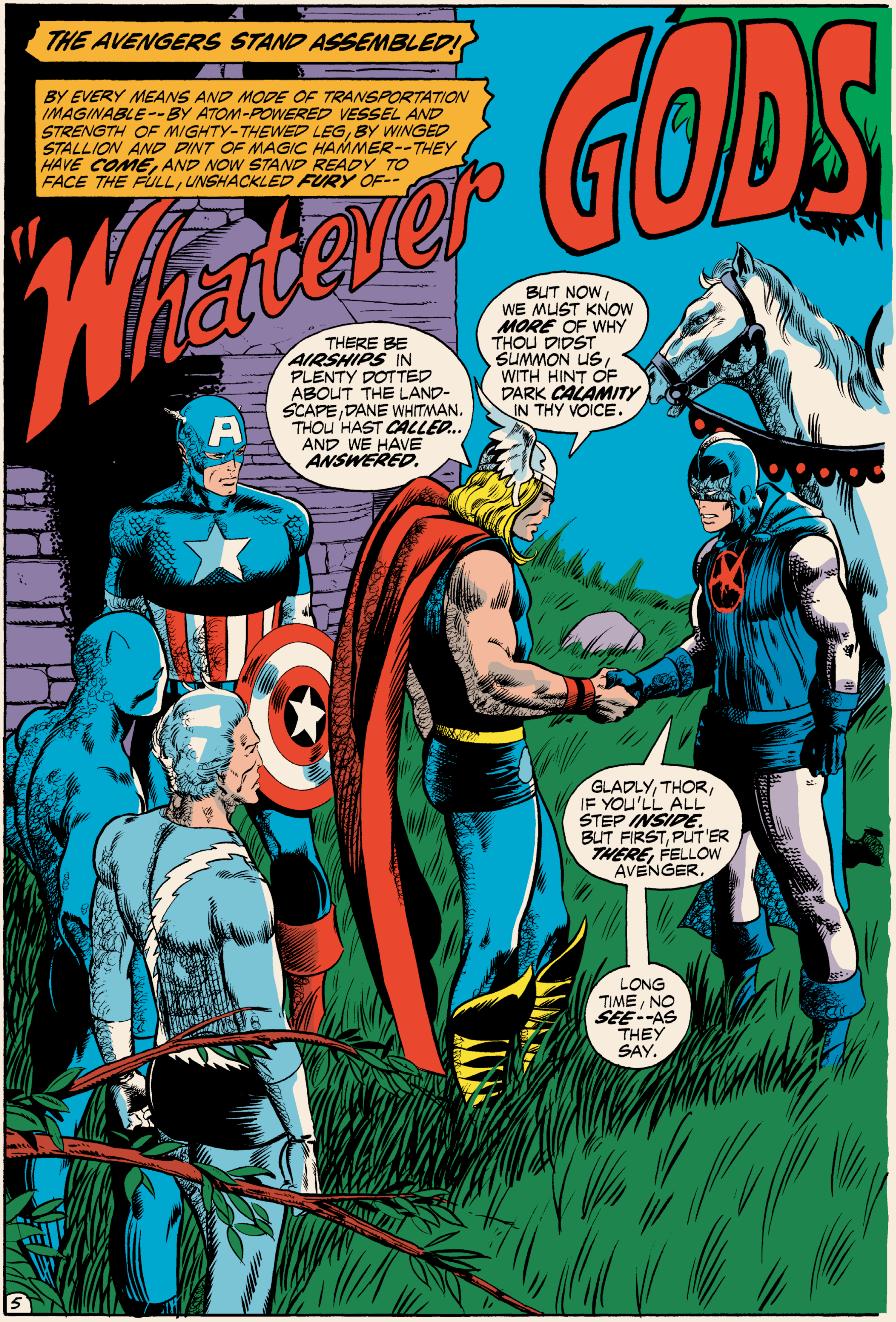
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

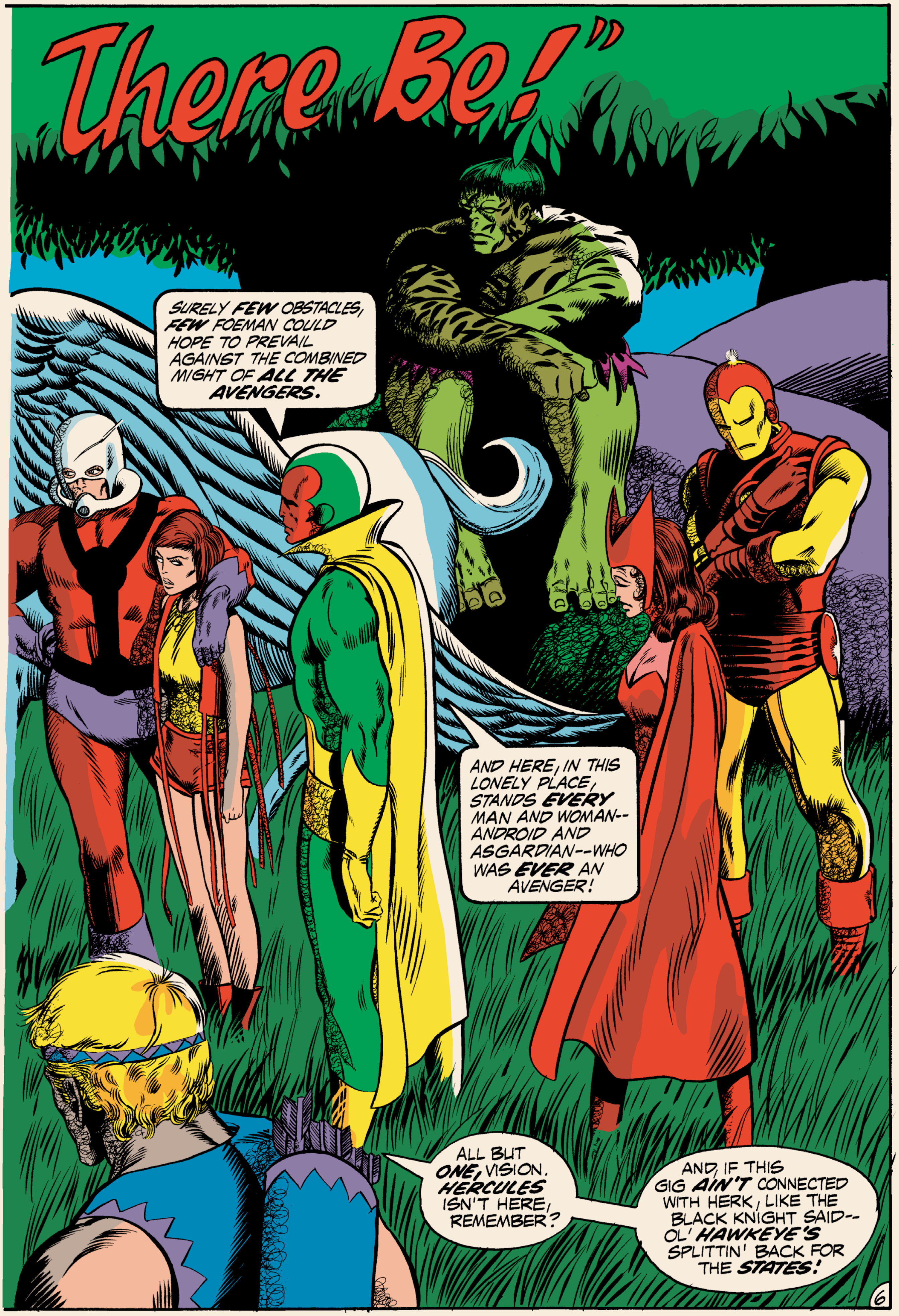

THE MOON: EAGLES AND TV CAMERAS AND GAMES OF GRATUITOUS GOLF HAVE ROBBED IT OF MUCH OF ITS ONCE-CONSIDERABLE MYSTERY... ITS PRISTINE FASCINATION. OH, IT'S STILL THERE, THAT METEOR-SCARRED ONE-OF-A-KIND SATELLITE OF OURS... BUT NOW, PERHAPS, INSTEAD OF BEING WATCHED ITSELF, COULD BE IT SPIES ON US IN BEMUSED WONDERMENT...
IF SO, THEN SURELY IT MUST STARE WIDE-EYED AT THE FLUTTERING PHANTASM WHICH GREETS ITS GAZE THIS NIGHT OF NIGHTS...
DOWN, ARAGORN! DOWN, MY WINGED, WHITE BEAUTY!
THERE'S MORE TO DO ON THE GROUNDS OF GARRETT CASTLE TONIGHT, THAN IN THE STAR-FLECKED SKY!
FEAR NOT. OUR GUESTS WILL COME SOON... QUITE SOON!
ENJOY YE NOW THIS MOMENT OF TOMBLIKE TRANQUILITY WHILE YE MAY, BELIEVER! IT SHALL NOT LONG ENDURE-- AND WE'RE BETTING YOU WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY--!
STAN LEE PRESENTS, PONDERS, AND PRESIDES OVER A CENTENNIAL SUPER-SPECTACULAR BY:
ROY THOMAS WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
INKED BY: SMITH, SINNOTT, AND SHORES
LETTERED BY: JON COSTA

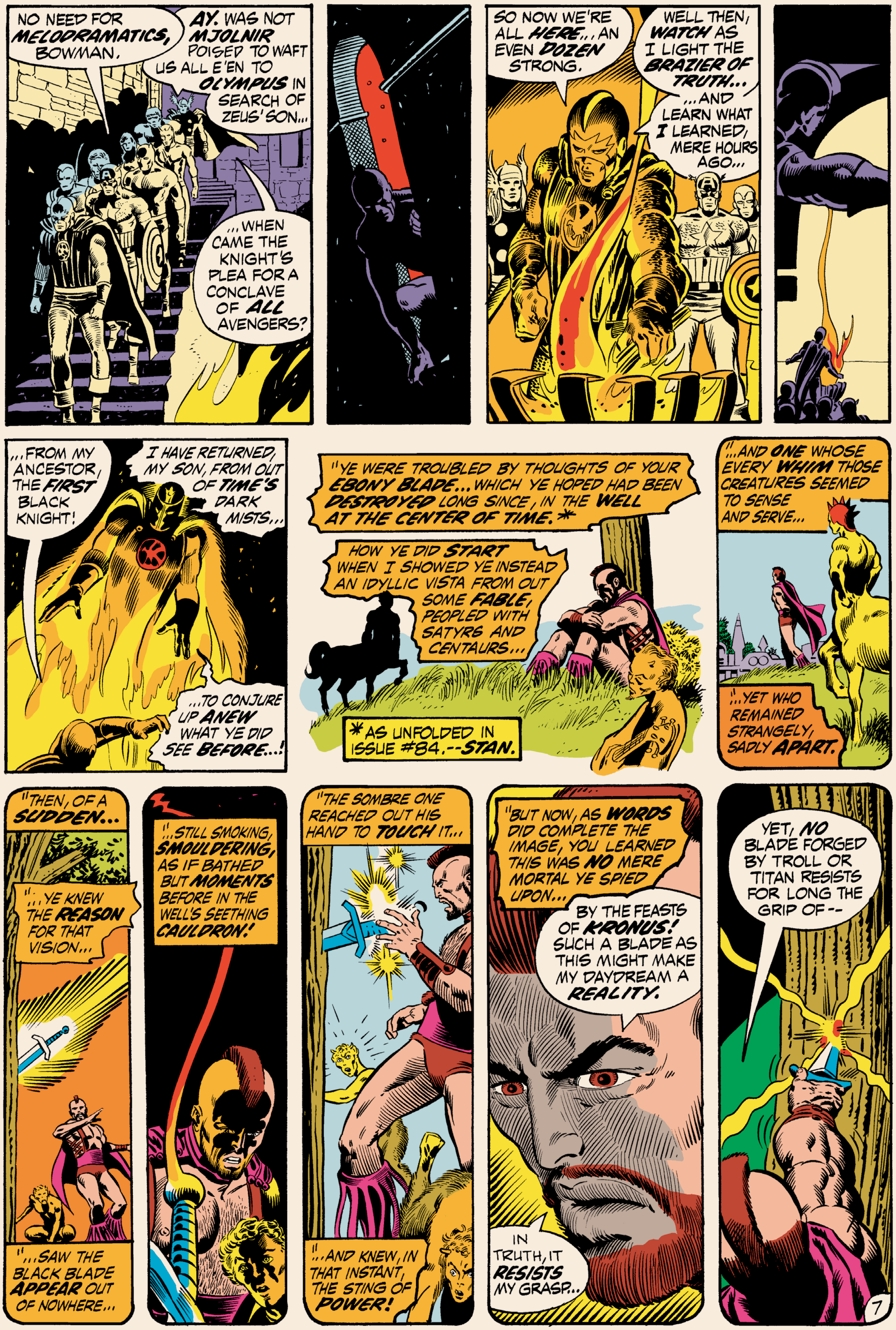

AND NOW IT BEGINS...
THEY ARRIVE GLEAMING AT HYPERSONIC SPEEDS...
...OR SILENTLY SHIMMERING ON GOSSAMER WINGS...
WHILE, FOUR THOUSAND MILES DISTANT FROM THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE...
...A GRIM-VOICED YOUTH BARKS CLEAR COORDINATES WHICH SPAN AN OCEAN...
AND THE HEARERS RESPOND, EACH IN HIS OWN UNIQUE WAY...
2

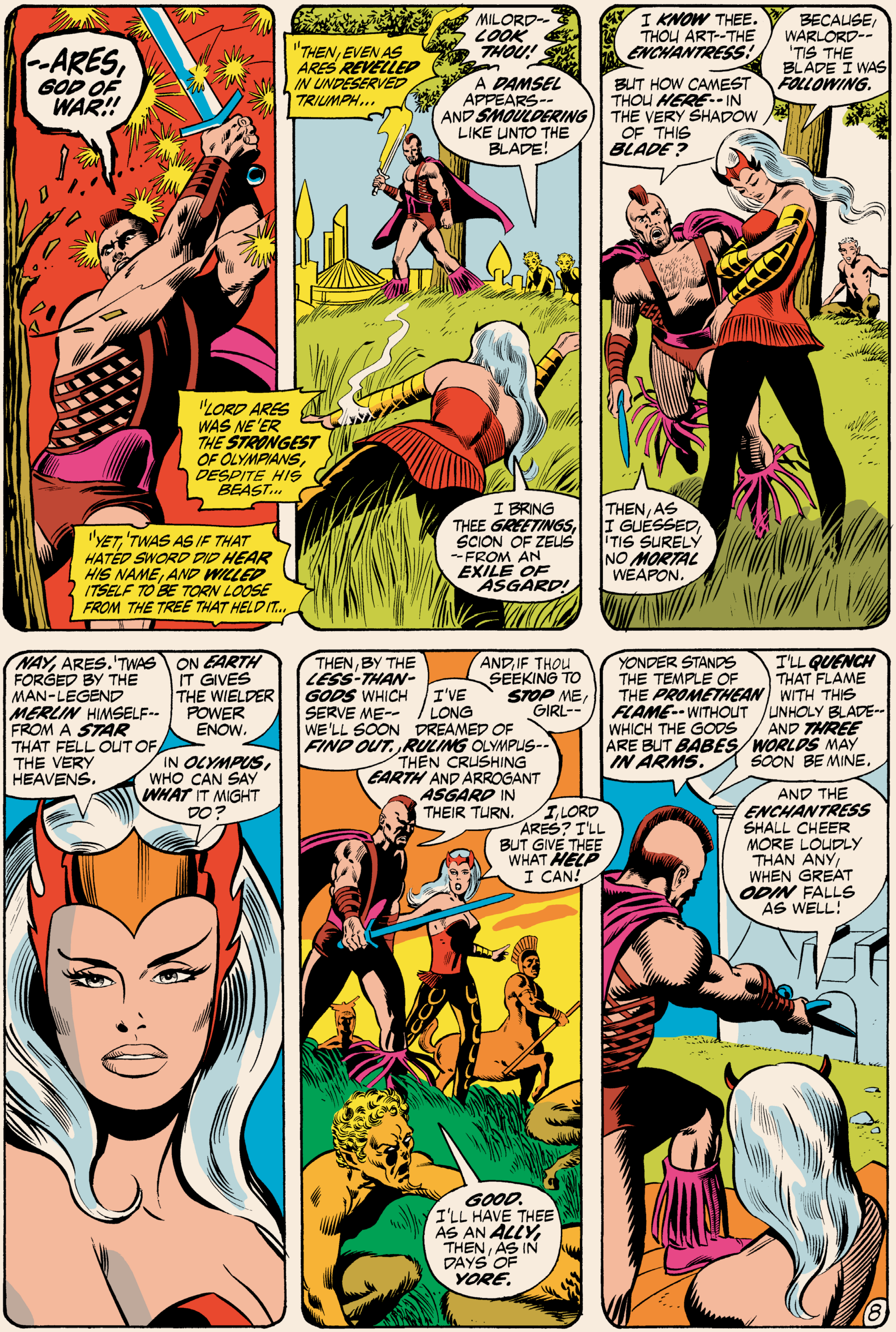

SOME THERE ARE WHO SOAR ABOVE THE TREES...
SOME, WHO RACE AROUND THE TREES...
SOME WHO PASS RIGHT THRU THE TREES...
AND ONE THERE IS...
ONE ONLY, THANK THE GODS...
...WHO LEVELS THE TREES, WITH A SINGLE SWIPE OF GARGANTUAN FIST!
HULK IS HERE!
BUT-- WHERE IS HERE??
3

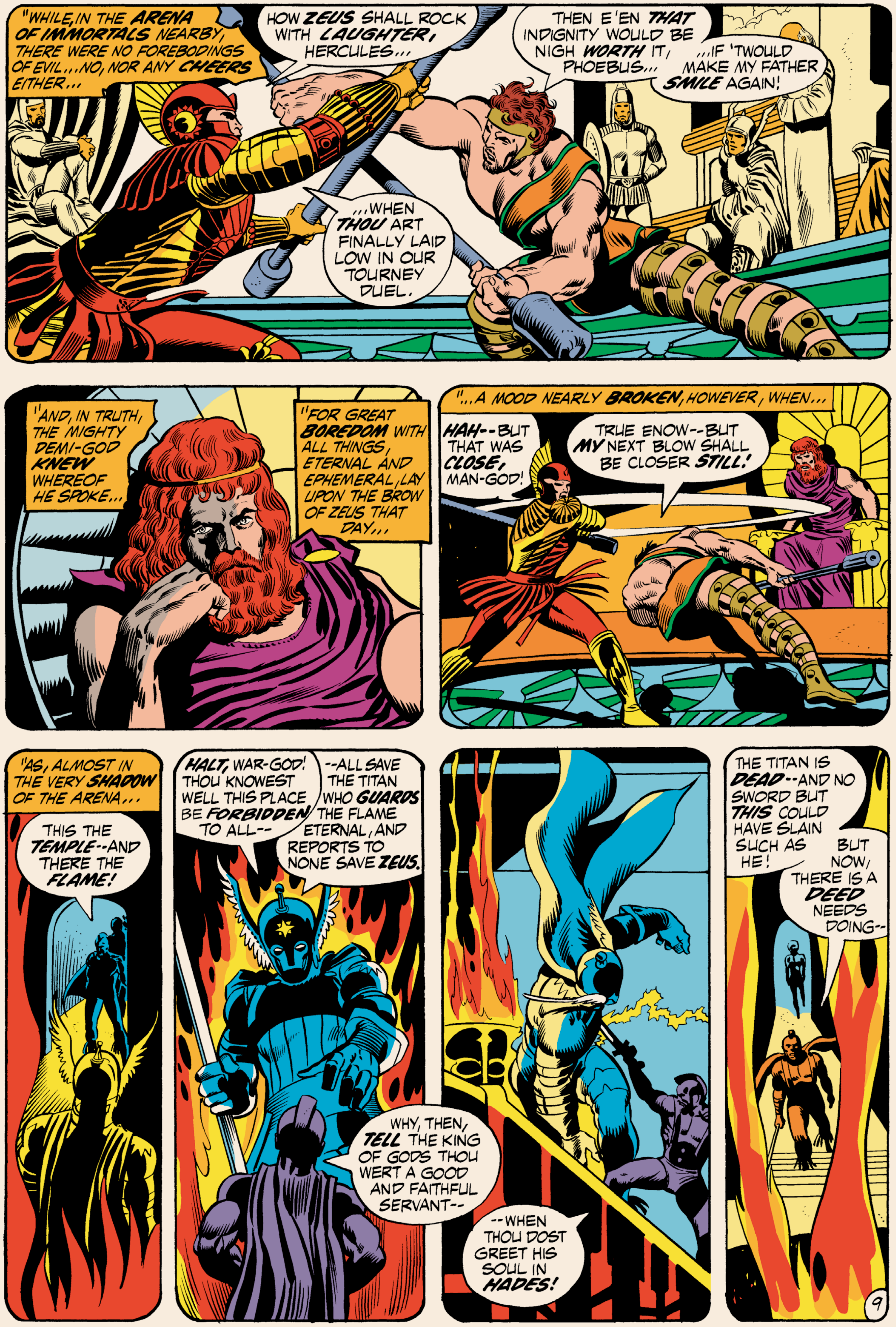

WHEREVER IT IS--HULK IS NOT ALONE.
SEE OTHERS--UP AHEAD!
HULK WILL GO TO THEM...!
AVENGERS--LOOK!
IT'S THE HULK!
AVENGERS!? HULK KNOWS YOU!
YOU FOUGHT HULK BEFORE--TRIED TO CAGE HIM!
AND THIS TIME, GREEN-EYES--WE'RE GONNA--
HAWKEYE--HOLD!
MATTER OF FACT--EVERYBODY HOLD IT! I HAD THE HULK SUMMONED HERE TO ENGLAND...
--AS AN ALLY, NOT A FOE TO BE HOUNDED OR HARASSED.
I BE NEWLY ARRIVED AS WELL, MY FRIEND. WHAT BEFALLS?
HULK HEARD VOICES... IN HEAD...TOLD HIM TO COME HERE.
WELL, HULK IS HERE. NOW WHAT?
NOW, HULK... WE DECIDE THE FATE OF WORLDS.
WORLDS? WHAT DOES HULK CARE ABOUT WORLDS?
SO HULK WILL LEAVE THIS PLACE--AND YOU WILL NOT TRY TO STOP HIM--
HULK JUST KNOWS YOU ARE NOT HIS FRIENDS--BECAUSE HE HAS NO FRIENDS.
--OR HULK WILL SMASH!
KRAAK
I TOLD YOU, CAP, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO SUMMON THAT MAN-MONSTER.
YOUR MESSAGE SAID YOU NEEDED ALL THE AVENGERS, BLACK KNIGHT--EACH AND EVERY ONE--
AND THE HULK WAS AN AVENGER, BEFORE EITHER OF US.
AVENGER? AVENGER?! YES... NOW HULK SEEMS TO REMEMBER... JUST A LITTLE... IT WAS LONG AGO.
SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY. HULK WILL LISTEN...
...THEN DECIDE TO GO OR STAY.
4

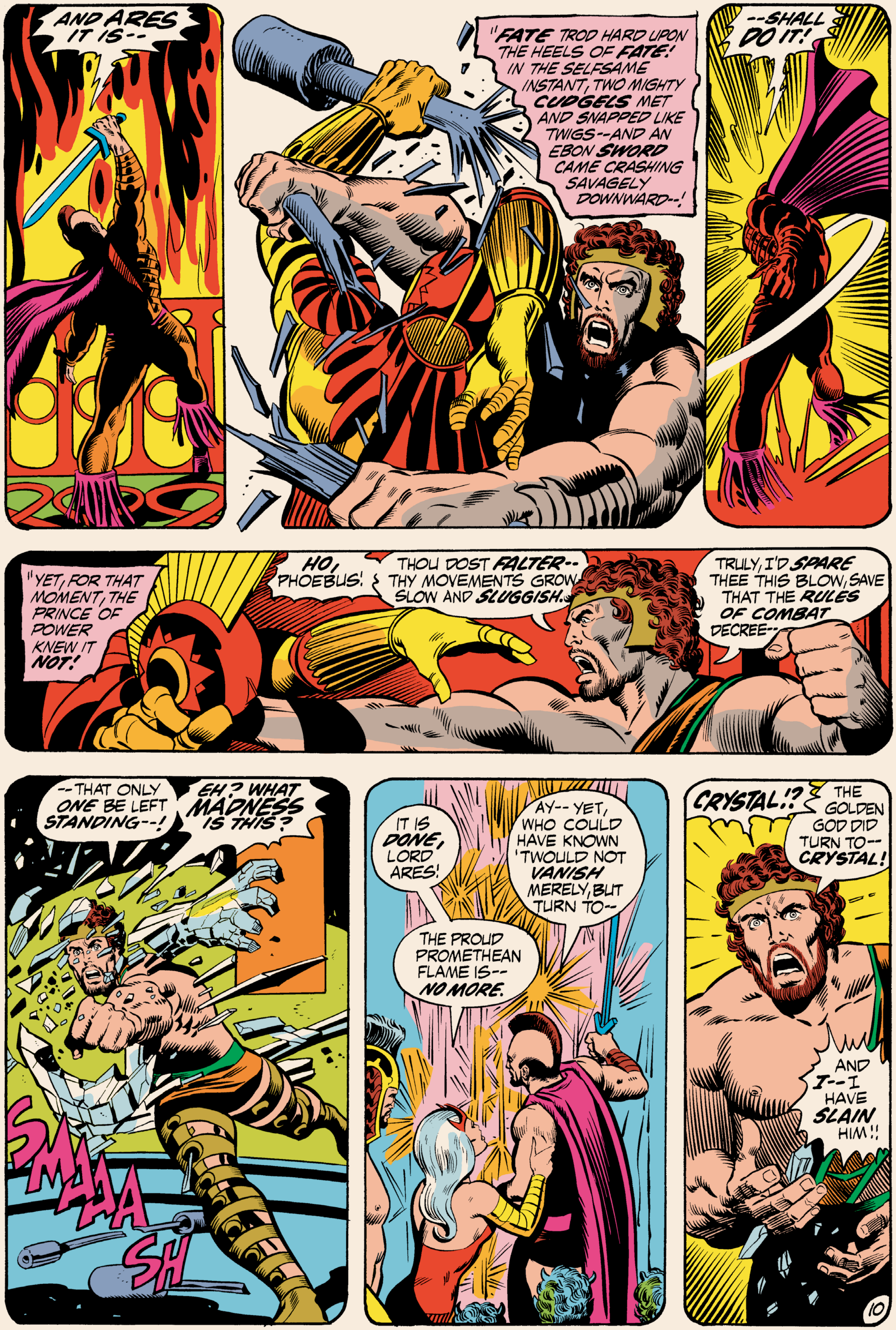

THE AVENGERS STAND ASSEMBLED!
BY EVERY MEANS AND MODE OF TRANSPORTATION IMAGINABLE--BY ATOM-POWERED VESSEL AND STRENGTH OF MIGHTY-THEWED LEG, BY WINGED STALLION AND DINT OF MAGIC HAMMER--THEY HAVE COME, AND NOW STAND READY TO FACE THE FULL, UNSHACKLED FURY OF--
"Whatever GODS
THERE BE AIRSHIPS IN PLENTY DOTTED ABOUT THE LANDSCAPE, DANE WHITMAN. THOU HAST CALLED... AND WE HAVE ANSWERED.
BUT NOW, WE MUST KNOW MORE OF WHY THOU DIDST SUMMON US, WITH HINT OF DARK CALAMITY IN THY VOICE.
GLADLY, THOR, IF YOU'LL ALL STEP INSIDE. BUT FIRST, PUT'ER THERE, FELLOW AVENGER.
LONG TIME, NO SEE--AS THEY SAY.
5

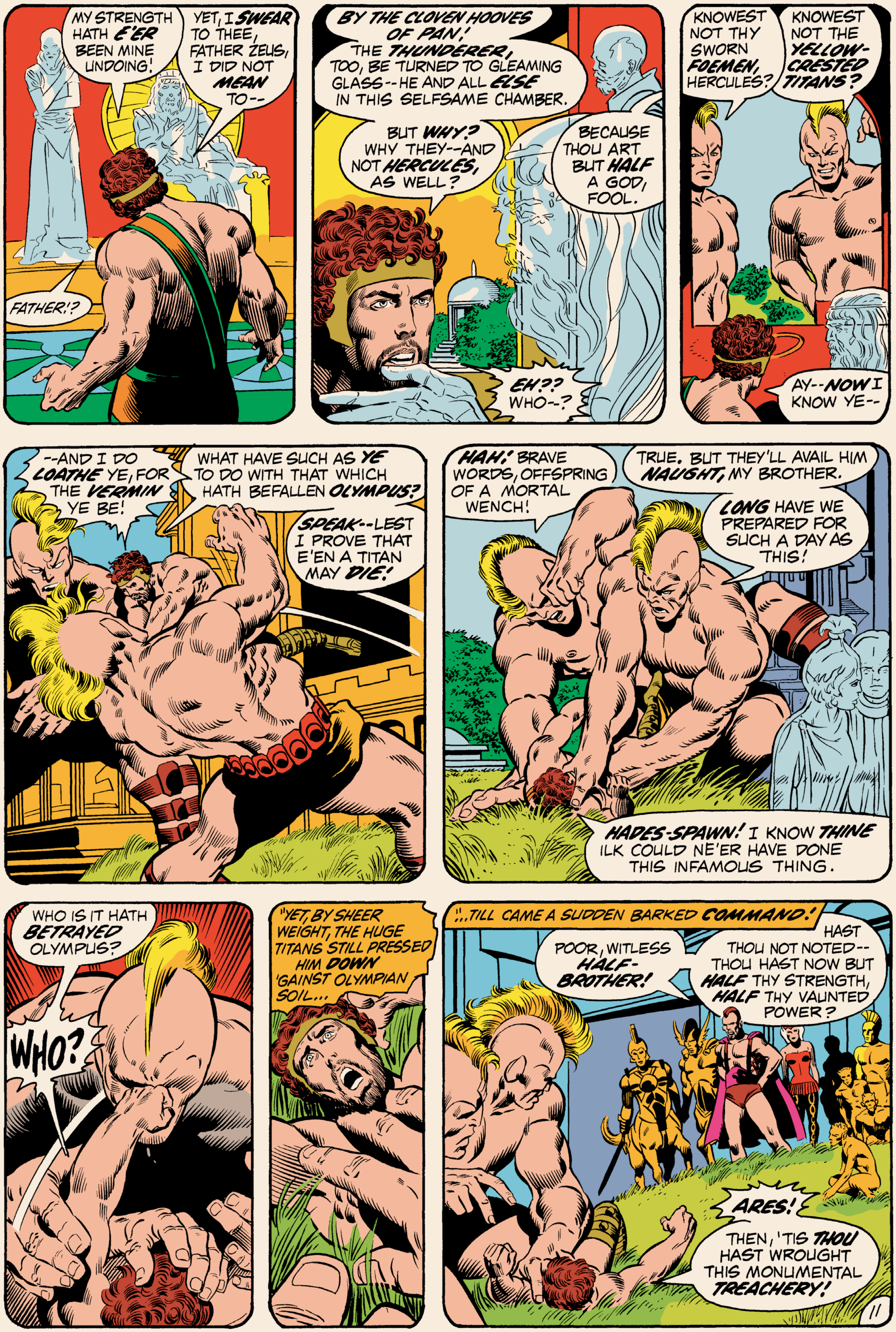

There Be!"
SURELY FEW OBSTACLES, FEW FOEMAN COULD HOPE TO PREVAIL AGAINST THE COMBINED MIGHT OF ALL THE AVENGERS.
AND HERE, IN THIS LONELY PLACE, STANDS EVERY MAN AND WOMAN--ANDROID AND ASGARDIAN--WHO WAS EVER AN AVENGER!
ALL BUT ONE, VISION. HERCULES ISN'T HERE, REMEMBER?
AND, IF THIS GIG AIN'T CONNECTED WITH HERK, LIKE THE BLACK KNIGHT SAID--OL' HAWKEYE'S SPLITTIN' BACK FOR THE STATES!
6

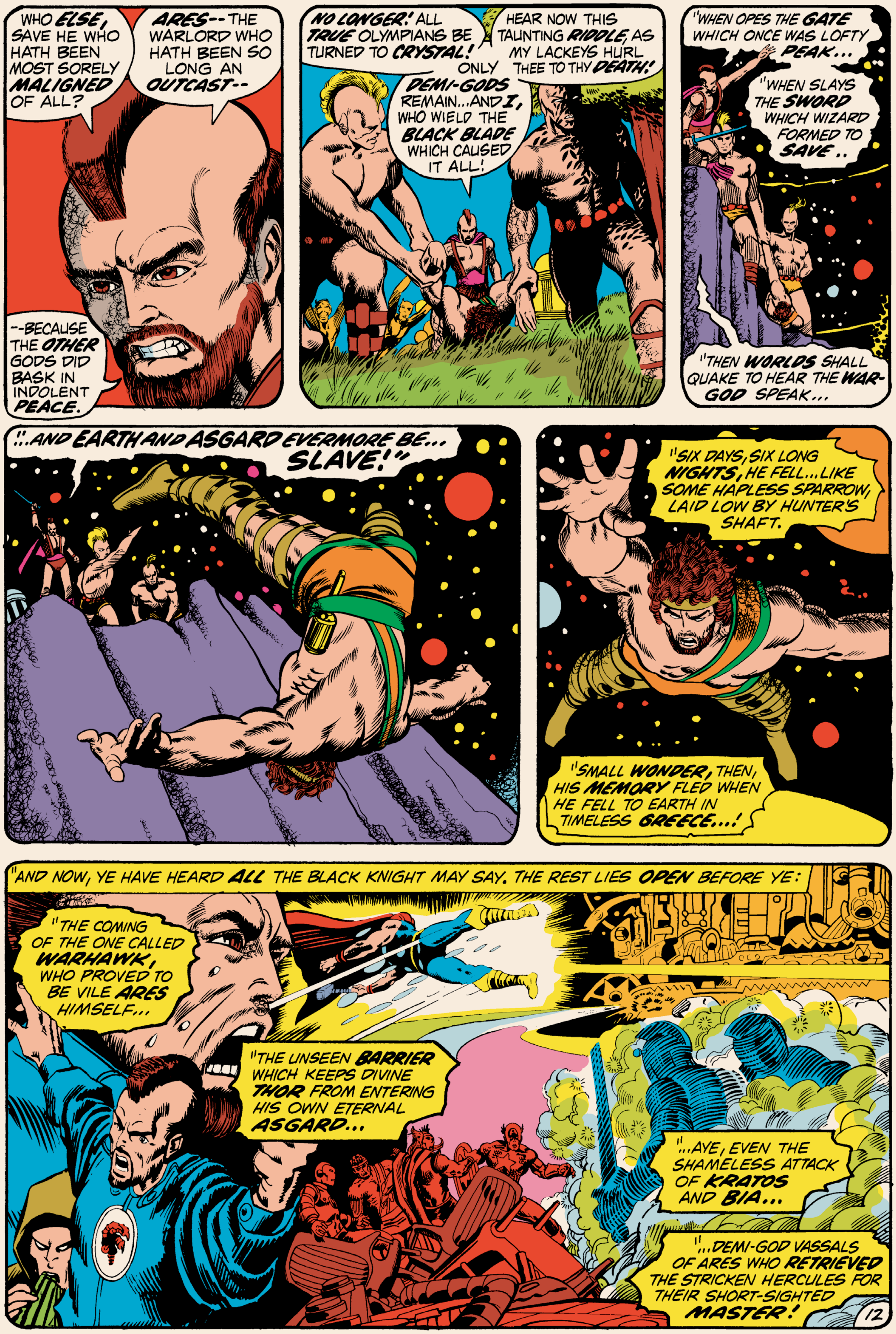

NO NEED FOR MELODRAMATICS, BOWMAN.
AY. WAS NOT MJOLNIR POISED TO WAFT US ALL E'EN TO OLYMPUS IN SEARCH OF ZEUS' SON...
...WHEN CAME THE KNIGHT'S PLEA FOR A CONCLAVE OF ALL AVENGERS?
SO NOW WE'RE ALL HERE... AN EVEN DOZEN STRONG.
WELL THEN, WATCH AS I LIGHT THE BRAZIER OF TRUTH...
...AND LEARN WHAT I LEARNED, MERE HOURS AGO...
...FROM MY ANCESTOR, THE FIRST BLACK KNIGHT!
I HAVE RETURNED, MY SON, FROM OUT OF TIME'S DARK MISTS...
...TO CONJURE UP ANEW WHAT YE DID SEE BEFORE...!
"YE WERE TROUBLED BY THOUGHTS OF YOUR EBONY BLADE... WHICH YE HOPED HAD BEEN DESTROYED LONG SINCE, IN THE WELL AT THE CENTER OF TIME.*
HOW YE DID START WHEN I SHOWED YE INSTEAD AN IDYLLIC VISTA FROM OUT SOME FABLE, PEOPLED WITH SATYRS AND CENTAURS...
*AS UNFOLDED IN ISSUE #84.--STAN.
"...AND ONE WHOSE EVERY WHIM THOSE CREATURES SEEMED TO SENSE AND SERVE...
"...YET WHO REMAINED STRANGELY, SADLY APART.
"THEN, OF A SUDDEN...
"...YE KNEW THE REASON FOR THAT VISION...
"...SAW THE BLACK BLADE APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE...
"...STILL SMOKING, SMOULDERING, AS IF BATHED BUT MOMENTS BEFORE IN THE WELL'S SEETHING CAULDRON!
"THE SOMBRE ONE REACHED OUT HIS HAND TO TOUCH IT...
"...AND KNEW, IN THAT INSTANT, THE STING OF POWER!
"BUT NOW, AS WORDS DID COMPLETE THE IMAGE, YOU LEARNED THIS WAS NO MERE MORTAL YE SPIED UPON...
BY THE FEASTS OF KRONUS! SUCH A BLADE AS THIS MIGHT MAKE MY DAYDREAM A REALITY.
IN TRUTH, IT RESISTS MY GRASP...
YET, NO BLADE FORGED BY TROLL OR TITAN RESISTS FOR LONG THE GRIP OF--
7

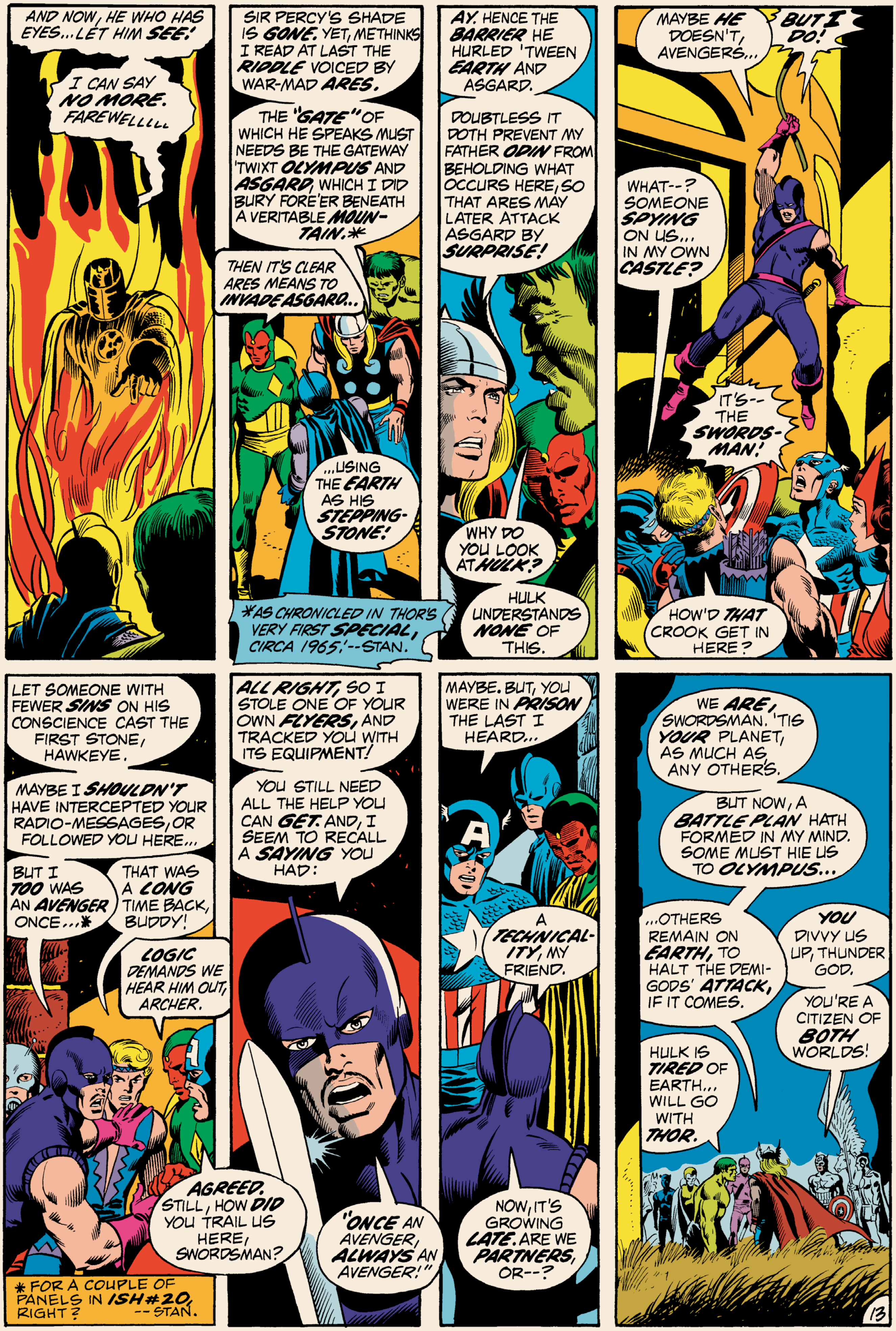

--ARES, GOD OF WAR!!
"LORD ARES WAS NE'ER THE STRONGEST OF OLYMPIANS, DESPITE HIS BEAST...
"YET, 'TWAS AS IF THAT HATED SWORD DID HEAR HIS NAME, AND WILLED ITSELF TO BE TORN LOOSE FROM THE TREE THAT HELD IT...
"THEN, EVEN AS ARES REVELLED IN UNDESERVED TRIUMPH...
MILORD-- LOOK THOU!
A DAMSEL APPEARS-- AND SMOULDERING LIKE UNTO THE BLADE!
I BRING THEE GREETINGS, SCION OF ZEUS --FROM AN EXILE OF ASGARD!
I KNOW THEE. THOU ART--THE ENCHANTRESS! BUT HOW CAMEST THOU HERE--IN THE VERY SHADOW OF THIS BLADE?
BECAUSE, WARLORD-- 'TIS THE BLADE I WAS FOLLOWING.
THEN, AS I GUESSED, 'TIS SURELY NO MORTAL WEAPON.
NAY, ARES. 'TWAS FORGED BY THE MAN-LEGEND MERLIN HIMSELF-- FROM A STAR THAT FELL OUT OF THE VERY HEAVENS.
ON EARTH IT GIVES THE WIELDER POWER ENOW.
IN OLYMPUS, WHO CAN SAY WHAT IT MIGHT DO?
I'VE LONG DREAMED OF RULING OLYMPUS-- THEN CRUSHING EARTH AND ARROGANT ASGARD IN THEIR TURN.
AND, IF THOU SEEKING TO STOP ME, GIRL--
THEN, BY THE LESS-THAN-GODS WHICH SERVE ME-- WE'LL SOON FIND OUT.
I, LORD ARES? I'LL BUT GIVE THEE WHAT HELP I CAN!
GOOD. I'LL HAVE THEE AS AN ALLY, THEN, AS IN DAYS OF YORE.
YONDER STANDS THE TEMPLE OF THE PROMETHEAN FLAME-- WITHOUT WHICH THE GODS ARE BUT BABES IN ARMS.
I'LL QUENCH THAT FLAME WITH THIS UNHOLY BLADE-- AND THREE WORLDS MAY SOON BE MINE.
AND THE ENCHANTRESS SHALL CHEER MORE LOUDLY THAN ANY, WHEN GREAT ODIN FALLS AS WELL!
8

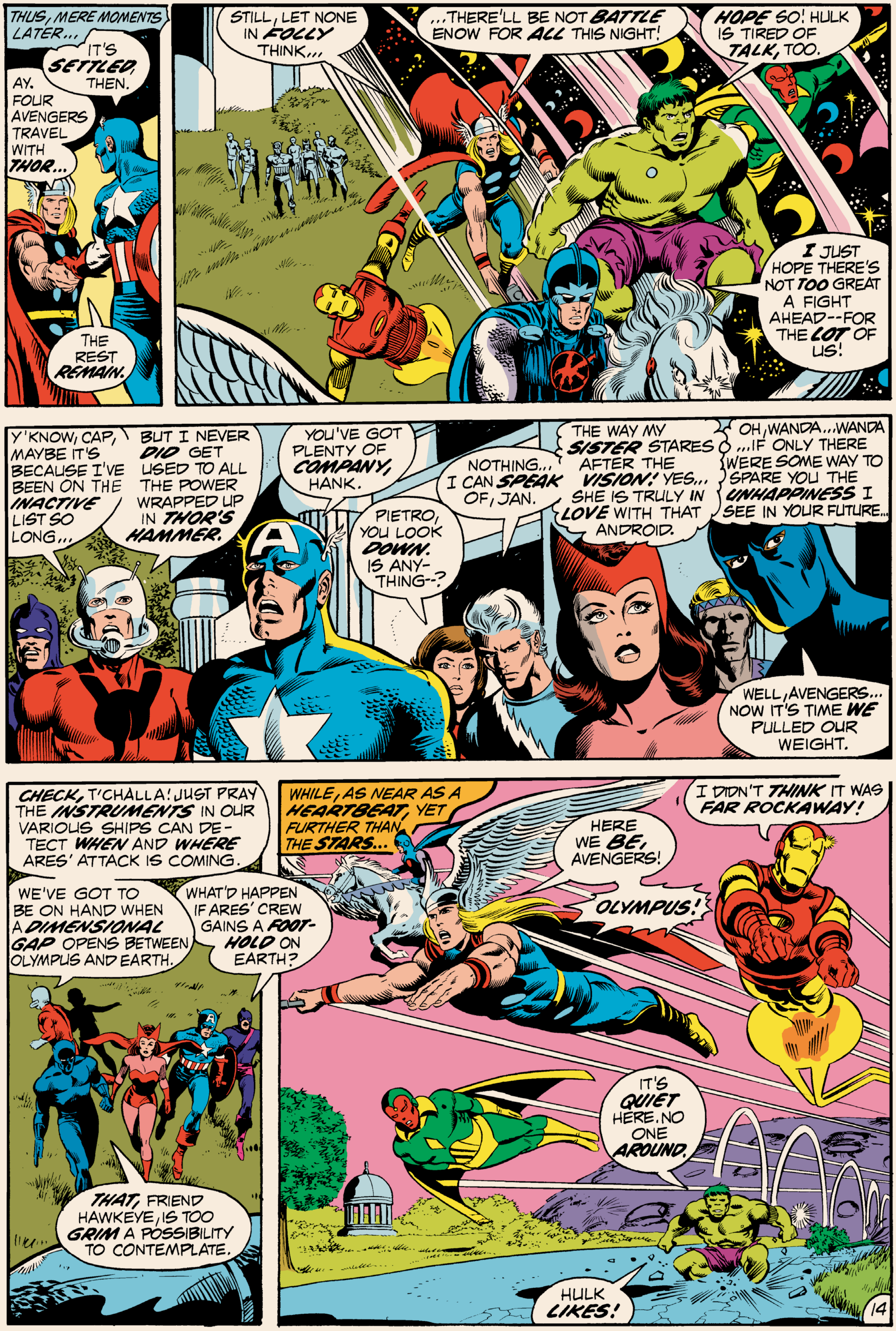

"WHILE, IN THE ARENA OF IMMORTALS NEARBY, THERE WERE NO FOREBODINGS OF EVIL... NO, NOR ANY CHEERS EITHER...
HOW ZEUS SHALL ROCK WITH LAUGHTER, HERCULES...
...WHEN THOU ART FINALLY LAID LOW IN OUR TOURNEY DUEL.
THEN E'EN THAT INDIGNITY WOULD BE NIGH WORTH IT, PHOEBUS...
...IF 'TWOULD MAKE MY FATHER SMILE AGAIN!
"AND, IN TRUTH, THE MIGHTY DEMI-GOD KNEW WHEREOF HE SPOKE...
"FOR GREAT BOREDOM WITH ALL THINGS, ETERNAL AND EPHEMERAL, LAY UPON THE BROW OF ZEUS THAT DAY...
"...A MOOD NEARLY BROKEN, HOWEVER, WHEN...
HAH--BUT THAT WAS CLOSE, MAN-GOD!
TRUE ENOW--BUT MY NEXT BLOW SHALL BE CLOSER STILL!
"AS, ALMOST IN THE VERY SHADOW OF THE ARENA...
THIS THE TEMPLE--AND THERE THE FLAME!
HALT, WAR-GOD! THOU KNOWEST WELL THIS PLACE BE FORBIDDEN TO ALL--
--ALL SAVE THE TITAN WHO GUARDS THE FLAME ETERNAL, AND REPORTS TO NONE SAVE ZEUS.
WHY, THEN, TELL THE KING OF GODS THOU WERT A GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT--
--WHEN THOU DOST GREET HIS SOUL IN HADES!
THE TITAN IS DEAD--AND NO SWORD BUT THIS COULD HAVE SLAIN SUCH AS HE!
BUT NOW, THERE IS A DEED NEEDS DOING--
9

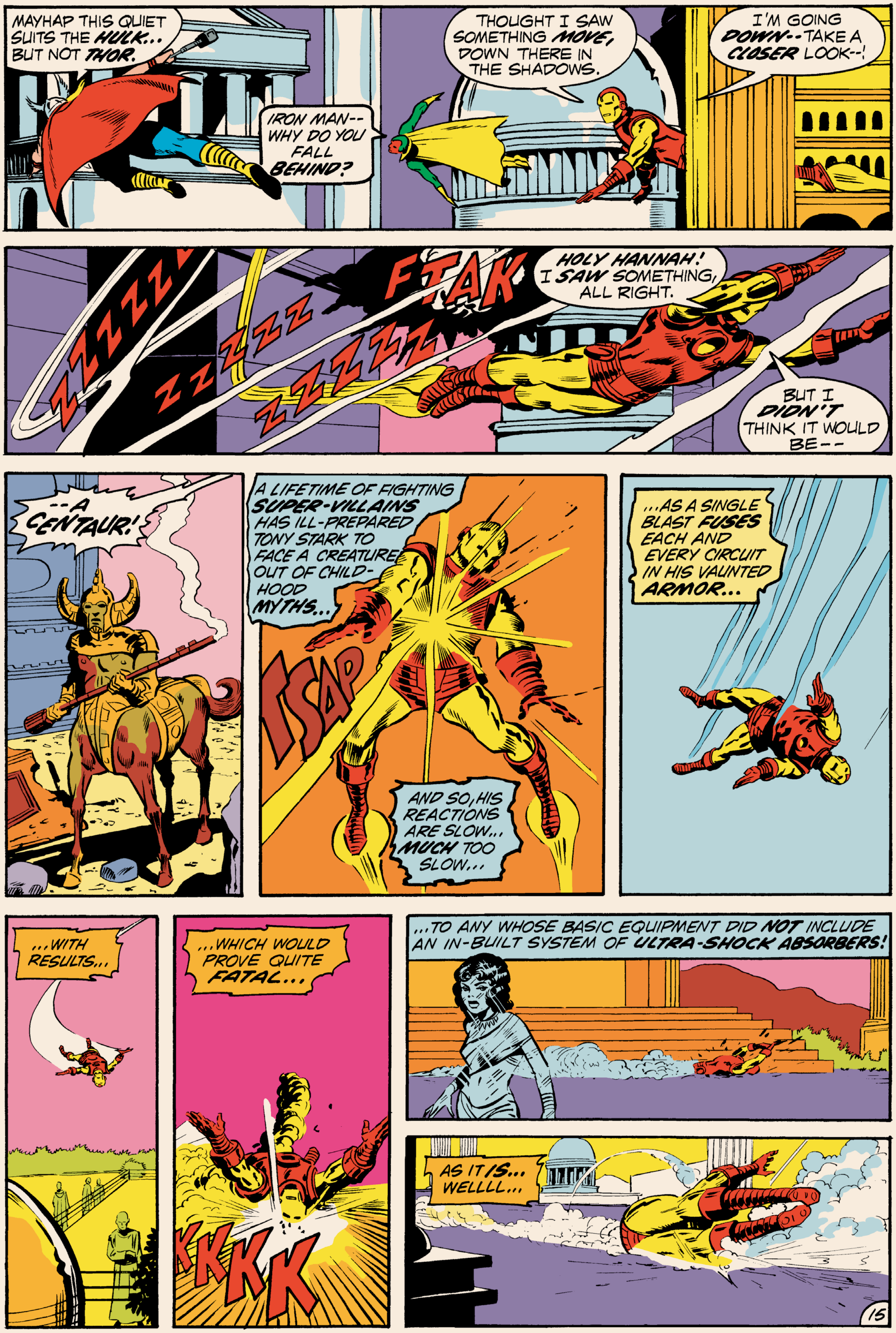

AND ARES IT IS--
"FATE TROD HARD UPON THE HEELS OF FATE! IN THE SELFSAME INSTANT, TWO MIGHTY CUDGELS MET AND SNAPPED LIKE TWIGS--AND AN EBON SWORD CAME CRASHING SAVAGELY DOWNWARD--!
--SHALL DO IT!
"YET, FOR THAT MOMENT, THE PRINCE OF POWER KNEW IT NOT!
HO, PHOEBUS!
THOU DOST FALTER-- THY MOVEMENTS GROW SLOW AND SLUGGISH.
TRULY, I'D SPARE THEE THIS BLOW, SAVE THAT THE RULES OF COMBAT DECREE--
--THAT ONLY ONE BE LEFT STANDING--!
EH? WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?
SMAAAASH
IT IS DONE, LORD ARES!
AY-- YET, WHO COULD HAVE KNOWN 'TWOULD NOT VANISH MERELY, BUT TURN TO--
THE PROUD PROMETHEAN FLAME IS-- NO MORE.
CRYSTAL!?
THE GOLDEN GOD DID TURN TO-- CRYSTAL!
AND I--I HAVE SLAIN HIM!!
10

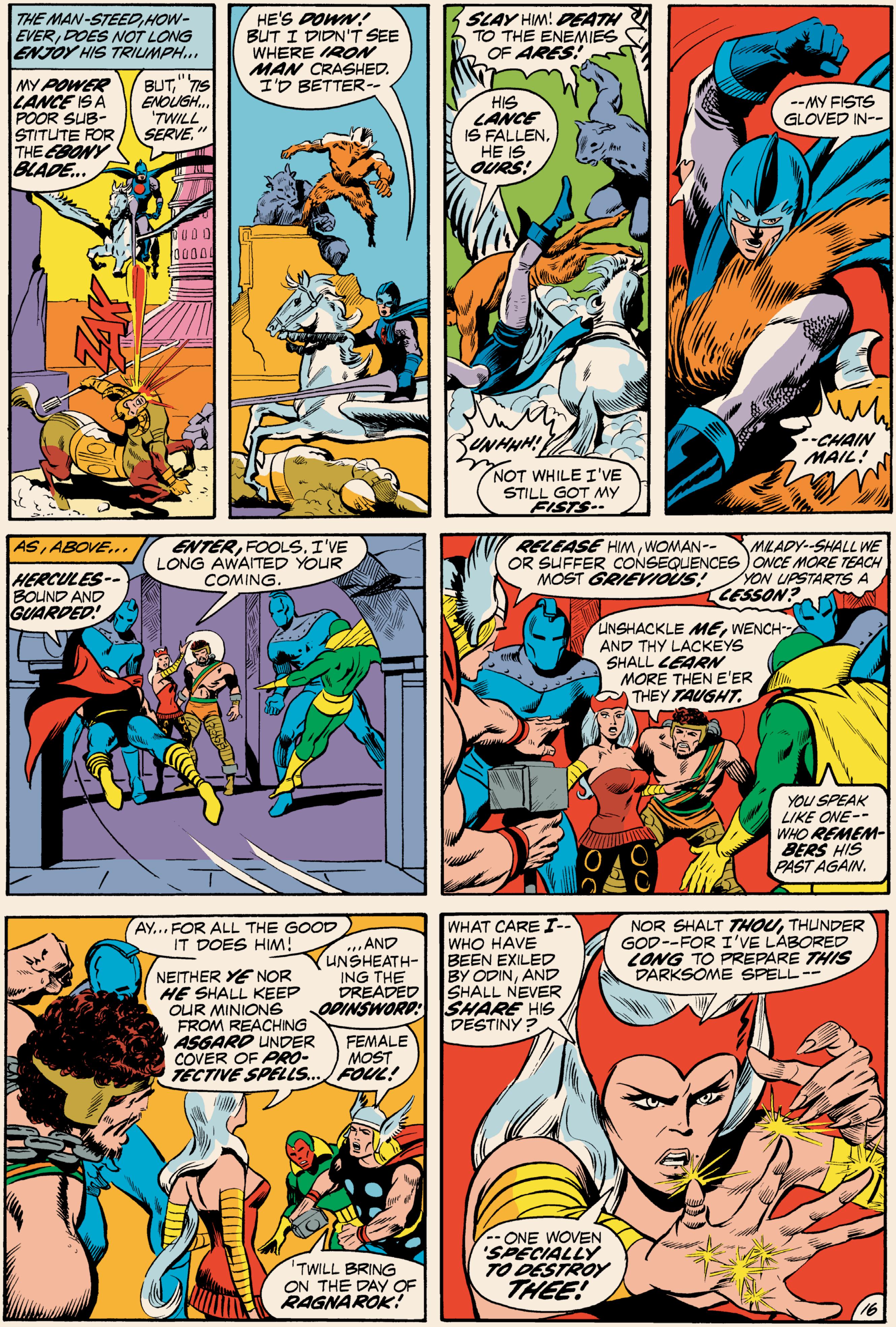

MY STRENGTH HATH E'ER BEEN MINE UNDOING!
YET, I SWEAR TO THEE, FATHER ZEUS, I DID NOT MEAN TO--
FATHER!?
BY THE CLOVEN HOOVES OF PAN! THE THUNDERER, TOO, BE TURNED TO GLEAMING GLASS--HE AND ALL ELSE IN THIS SELFSAME CHAMBER.
BUT WHY? WHY THEY--AND NOT HERCULES, AS WELL?
BECAUSE THOU ART BUT HALF A GOD, FOOL.
EH?? WHO--?
KNOWEST NOT THY SWORN FOEMEN, HERCULES?
KNOWEST NOT THE YELLOW-CRESTED TITANS?
AY--NOW I KNOW YE--
--AND I DO LOATHE YE, FOR THE VERMIN YE BE!
WHAT HAVE SUCH AS YE TO DO WITH THAT WHICH HATH BEFALLEN OLYMPUS?
SPEAK--LEST I PROVE THAT E'EN A TITAN MAY DIE!
HAH! BRAVE WORDS, OFFSPRING OF A MORTAL WENCH!
TRUE. BUT THEY'LL AVAIL HIM NAUGHT, MY BROTHER.
LONG HAVE WE PREPARED FOR SUCH A DAY AS THIS!
HADES-SPAWN! I KNOW THINE ILK COULD NE'ER HAVE DONE THIS INFAMOUS THING.
WHO IS IT HATH BETRAYED OLYMPUS?
WHO?
"YET, BY SHEER WEIGHT, THE HUGE TITANS STILL PRESSED HIM DOWN 'GAINST OLYMPIAN SOIL...
"...TILL CAME A SUDDEN BARKED COMMAND!"
POOR, WITLESS HALF-BROTHER!
HAST THOU NOT NOTED--THOU HAST NOW BUT HALF THY STRENGTH, HALF THY VAUNTED POWER?
ARES!
THEN, 'TIS THOU HAST WROUGHT THIS MONUMENTAL TREACHERY!
11

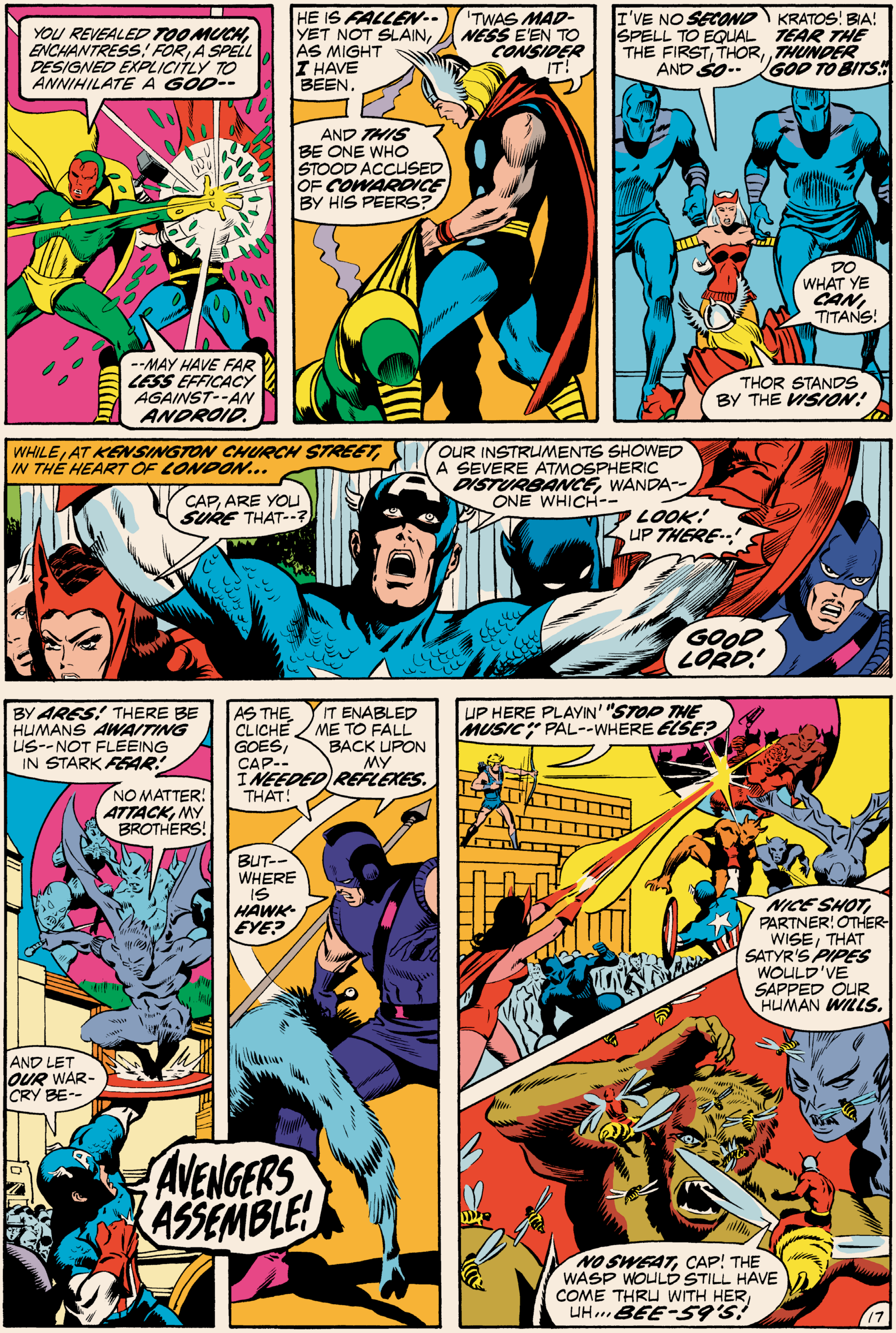

WHO ELSE, SAVE HE WHO HATH BEEN MOST SORELY MALIGNED OF ALL?
ARES-- THE WARLORD WHO HATH BEEN SO LONG AN OUTCAST--
--BECAUSE THE OTHER GODS DID BASK IN INDOLENT PEACE.
NO LONGER! ALL TRUE OLYMPIANS BE TURNED TO CRYSTAL! ONLY DEMI-GODS REMAIN...AND I, WHO WIELD THE BLACK BLADE WHICH CAUSED IT ALL!
HEAR NOW THIS TAUNTING RIDDLE, AS MY LACKEYS HURL THEE TO THY DEATH!
"WHEN OPES THE GATE WHICH ONCE WAS LOFTY PEAK...
"WHEN SLAYS THE SWORD WHICH WIZARD FORMED TO SAVE..
"THEN WORLDS SHALL QUAKE TO HEAR THE WAR-GOD SPEAK...
"...AND EARTH AND ASGARD EVERMORE BE... SLAVE!"
"SIX DAYS, SIX LONG NIGHTS, HE FELL... LIKE SOME HAPLESS SPARROW, LAID LOW BY HUNTER'S SHAFT.
"SMALL WONDER, THEN, HIS MEMORY FLED WHEN HE FELL TO EARTH IN TIMELESS GREECE...!
"AND NOW, YE HAVE HEARD ALL THE BLACK KNIGHT MAY SAY. THE REST LIES OPEN BEFORE YE:
"THE COMING OF THE ONE CALLED WARHAWK, WHO PROVED TO BE VILE ARES HIMSELF...
"THE UNSEEN BARRIER WHICH KEEPS DIVINE THOR FROM ENTERING HIS OWN ETERNAL ASGARD...
"...AYE, EVEN THE SHAMELESS ATTACK OF KRATOS AND BIA...
"...DEMI-GOD VASSALS OF ARES WHO RETRIEVED THE STRICKEN HERCULES FOR THEIR SHORT-SIGHTED MASTER!
12

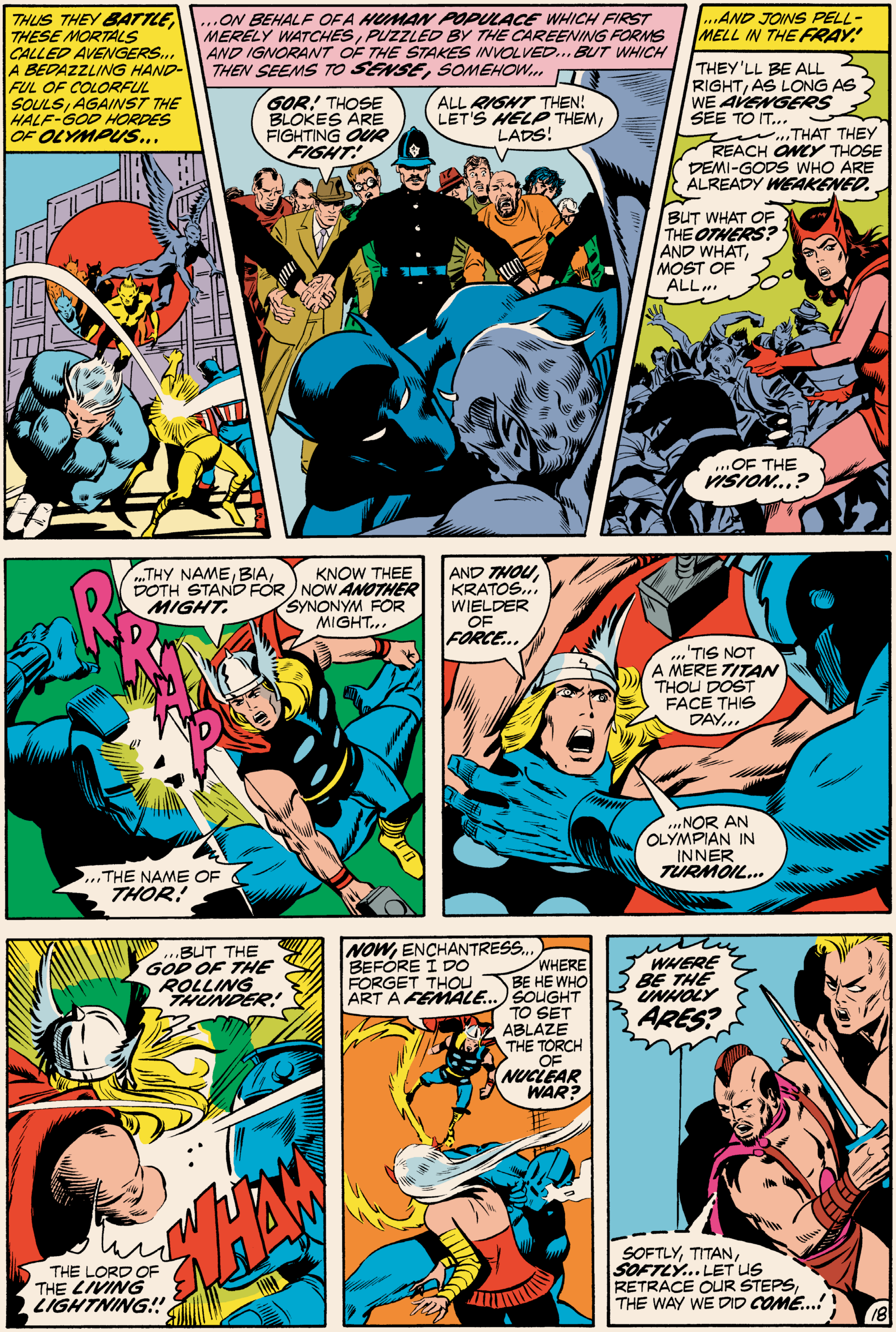

AND NOW, HE WHO HAS EYES... LET HIM SEE!
I CAN SAY NO MORE. FAREWELLLLL
SIR PERCY'S SHADE IS GONE. YET, METHINKS I READ AT LAST THE RIDDLE VOICED BY WAR-MAD ARES.
THE "GATE" OF WHICH HE SPEAKS MUST NEEDS BE THE GATEWAY 'TWIXT OLYMPUS AND ASGARD, WHICH I DID BURY FORE'ER BENEATH A VERITABLE MOUNTAIN.*
THEN IT'S CLEAR ARES MEANS TO INVADE ASGARD...
...USING THE EARTH AS HIS STEPPING-STONE!
*AS CHRONICLED IN THOR'S VERY FIRST SPECIAL, CIRCA 1965.'--STAN.
AY. HENCE THE BARRIER HE HURLED 'TWEEN EARTH AND ASGARD.
DOUBTLESS IT DOTH PREVENT MY FATHER ODIN FROM BEHOLDING WHAT OCCURS HERE, SO THAT ARES MAY LATER ATTACK ASGARD BY SURPRISE!
WHY DO YOU LOOK AT HULK?
HULK UNDERSTANDS NONE OF THIS.
MAYBE HE DOESN'T, AVENGERS...
BUT I DO!
WHAT--? SOMEONE SPYING ON US... IN MY OWN CASTLE?
IT'S-- THE SWORDSMAN!
HOW'D THAT CROOK GET IN HERE?
LET SOMEONE WITH FEWER SINS ON HIS CONSCIENCE CAST THE FIRST STONE, HAWKEYE.
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE INTERCEPTED YOUR RADIO-MESSAGES, OR FOLLOWED YOU HERE...
BUT I TOO WAS AN AVENGER ONCE...*
THAT WAS A LONG TIME BACK, BUDDY!
LOGIC DEMANDS WE HEAR HIM OUT, ARCHER.
AGREED. STILL, HOW DID YOU TRAIL US HERE, SWORDSMAN?
*FOR A COUPLE OF PANELS IN ISH #20, RIGHT? --STAN.
ALL RIGHT, SO I STOLE ONE OF YOUR OWN FLYERS, AND TRACKED YOU WITH ITS EQUIPMENT!
YOU STILL NEED ALL THE HELP YOU CAN GET. AND, I SEEM TO RECALL A SAYING YOU HAD:
"ONCE AN AVENGER, ALWAYS AN AVENGER!"
MAYBE. BUT, YOU WERE IN PRISON THE LAST I HEARD...
A TECHNICALITY, MY FRIEND.
NOW, IT'S GROWING LATE. ARE WE PARTNERS, OR--?
WE ARE, SWORDSMAN. 'TIS YOUR PLANET, AS MUCH AS ANY OTHER'S.
BUT NOW, A BATTLE PLAN HATH FORMED IN MY MIND. SOME MUST HIE US TO OLYMPUS...
...OTHERS REMAIN ON EARTH, TO HALT THE DEMI-GODS' ATTACK, IF IT COMES.
YOU DIVVY US UP, THUNDER GOD.
YOU'RE A CITIZEN OF BOTH WORLDS!
HULK IS TIRED OF EARTH... WILL GO WITH THOR.
13

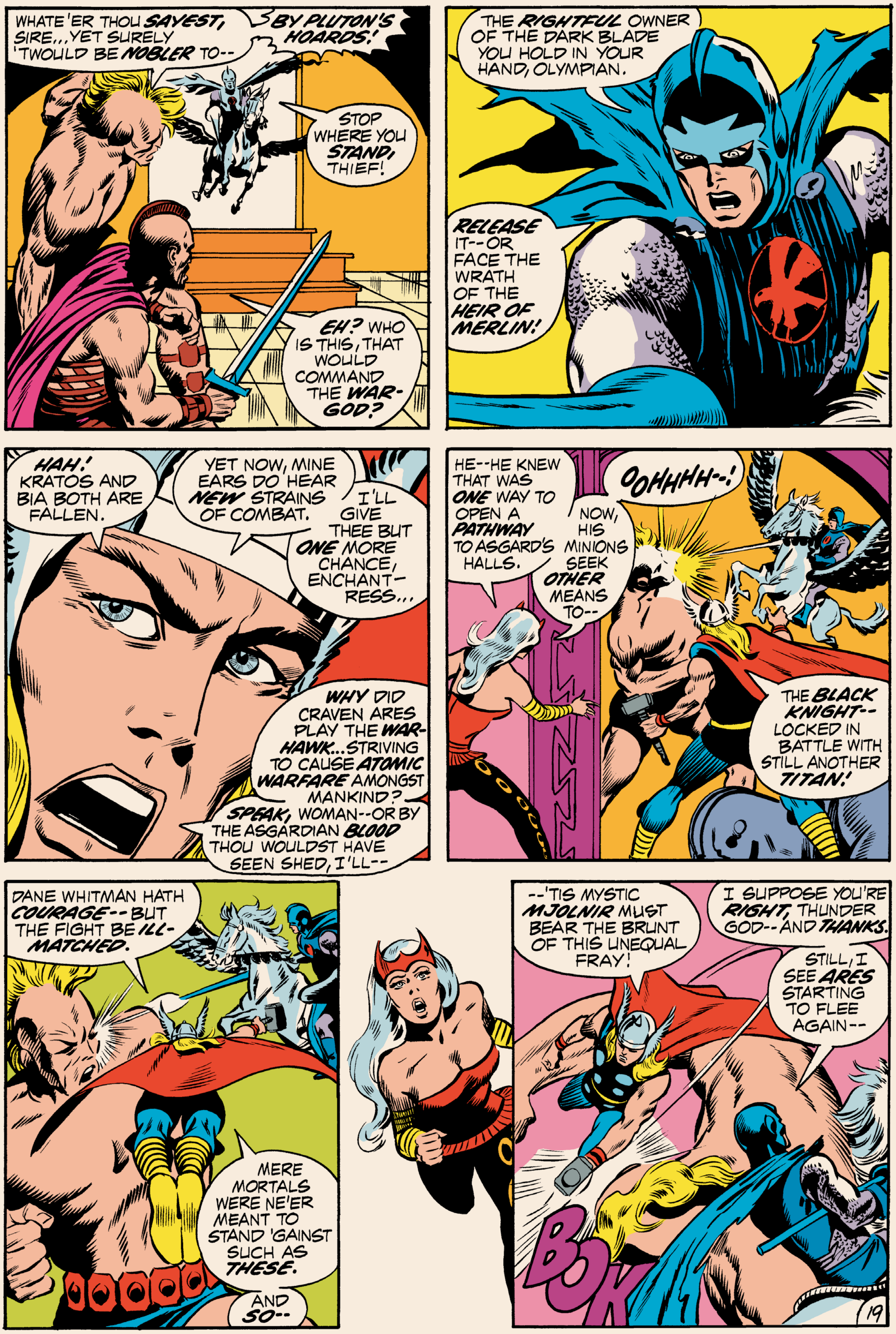

THUS, MERE MOMENTS LATER...
IT'S SETTLED, THEN.
AY. FOUR AVENGERS TRAVEL WITH THOR...
THE REST REMAIN.
STILL, LET NONE IN FOLLY THINK...
...THERE'LL BE NOT BATTLE ENOW FOR ALL THIS NIGHT!
HOPE SO! HULK IS TIRED OF TALK, TOO.
I JUST HOPE THERE'S NOT TOO GREAT A FIGHT AHEAD--FOR THE LOT OF US!
Y'KNOW, CAP, MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'VE BEEN ON THE INACTIVE LIST SO LONG...
BUT I NEVER DID GET USED TO ALL THE POWER WRAPPED UP IN THOR'S HAMMER.
YOU'VE GOT PLENTY OF COMPANY, HANK.
PIETRO, YOU LOOK DOWN. IS ANYTHING--?
NOTHING... I CAN SPEAK OF, JAN.
THE WAY MY SISTER STARES AFTER THE VISION! YES... SHE IS TRULY IN LOVE WITH THAT ANDROID.
OH, WANDA...WANDA ...IF ONLY THERE WERE SOME WAY TO SPARE YOU THE UNHAPPINESS I SEE IN YOUR FUTURE...
WELL, AVENGERS... NOW IT'S TIME WE PULLED OUR WEIGHT.
CHECK, T'CHALLA! JUST PRAY THE INSTRUMENTS IN OUR VARIOUS SHIPS CAN DETECT WHEN AND WHERE ARES' ATTACK IS COMING.
WE'VE GOT TO BE ON HAND WHEN A DIMENSIONAL GAP OPENS BETWEEN OLYMPUS AND EARTH.
WHAT'D HAPPEN IF ARES' CREW GAINS A FOOTHOLD ON EARTH?
THAT, FRIEND HAWKEYE, IS TOO GRIM A POSSIBILITY TO CONTEMPLATE.
WHILE, AS NEAR AS A HEARTBEAT, YET FURTHER THAN THE STARS...
HERE WE BE, AVENGERS!
OLYMPUS!
I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS FAR ROCKAWAY!
IT'S QUIET HERE. NO ONE AROUND.
HULK LIKES!
14

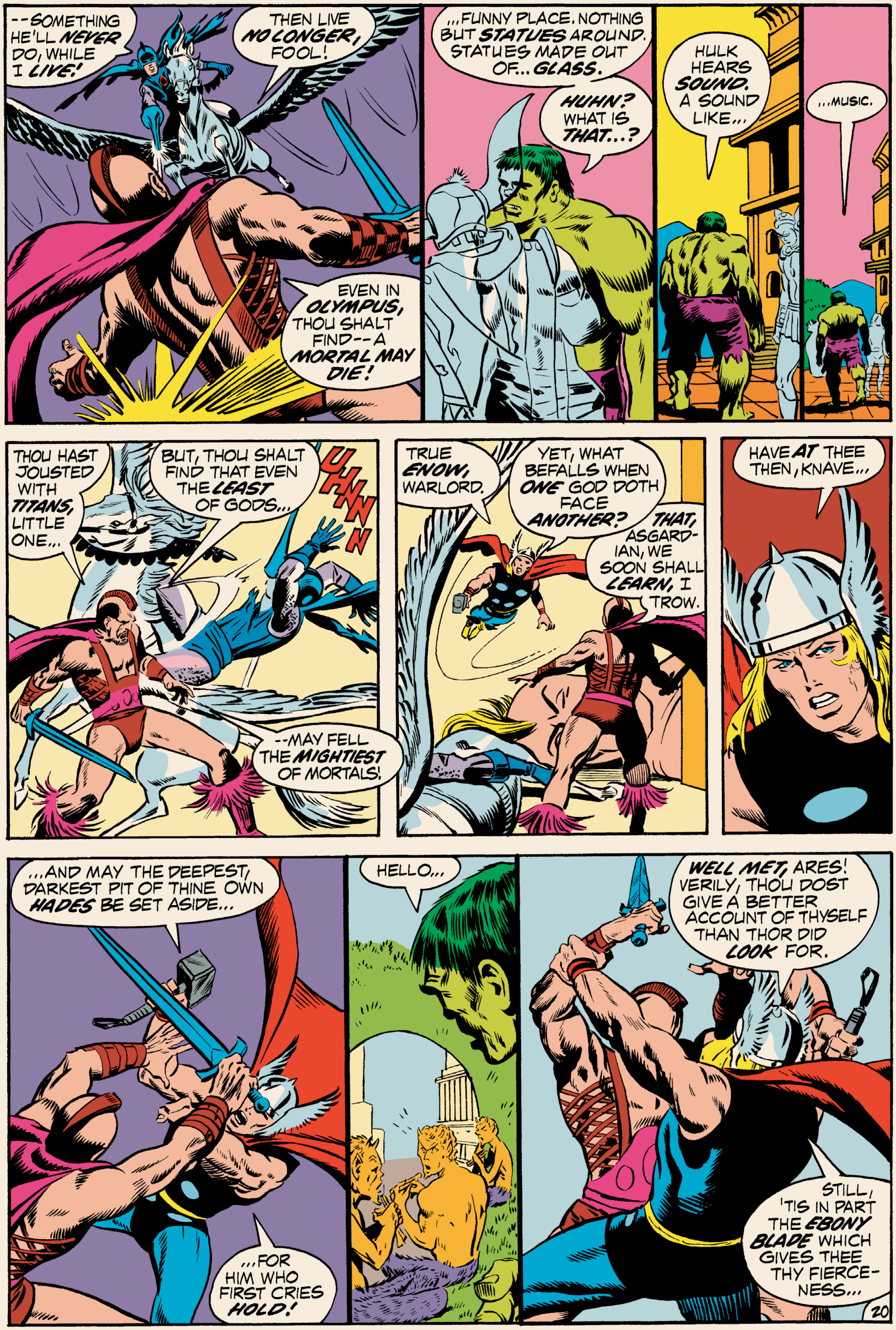

MAYHAP THIS QUIET SUITS THE HULK... BUT NOT THOR.
IRON MAN-- WHY DO YOU FALL BEHIND?
THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING MOVE, DOWN THERE IN THE SHADOWS.
I'M GOING DOWN--TAKE A CLOSER LOOK--!
ZZZZZZ ZZZZZ ZZZZZZ
FTAK
HOLY HANNAH! I SAW SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT.
BUT I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE--
--A CENTAUR!
A LIFETIME OF FIGHTING SUPER-VILLAINS HAS ILL-PREPARED TONY STARK TO FACE A CREATURE OUT OF CHILDHOOD MYTHS...
TSAP
AND SO, HIS REACTIONS ARE SLOW... MUCH TOO SLOW...
...AS A SINGLE BLAST FUSES EACH AND EVERY CIRCUIT IN HIS VAUNTED ARMOR...
...WITH RESULTS...
...WHICH WOULD PROVE QUITE FATAL...
KKKK
...TO ANY WHOSE BASIC EQUIPMENT DID NOT INCLUDE AN IN-BUILT SYSTEM OF ULTRA-SHOCK ABSORBERS!
AS IT IS... WELLLL...
15

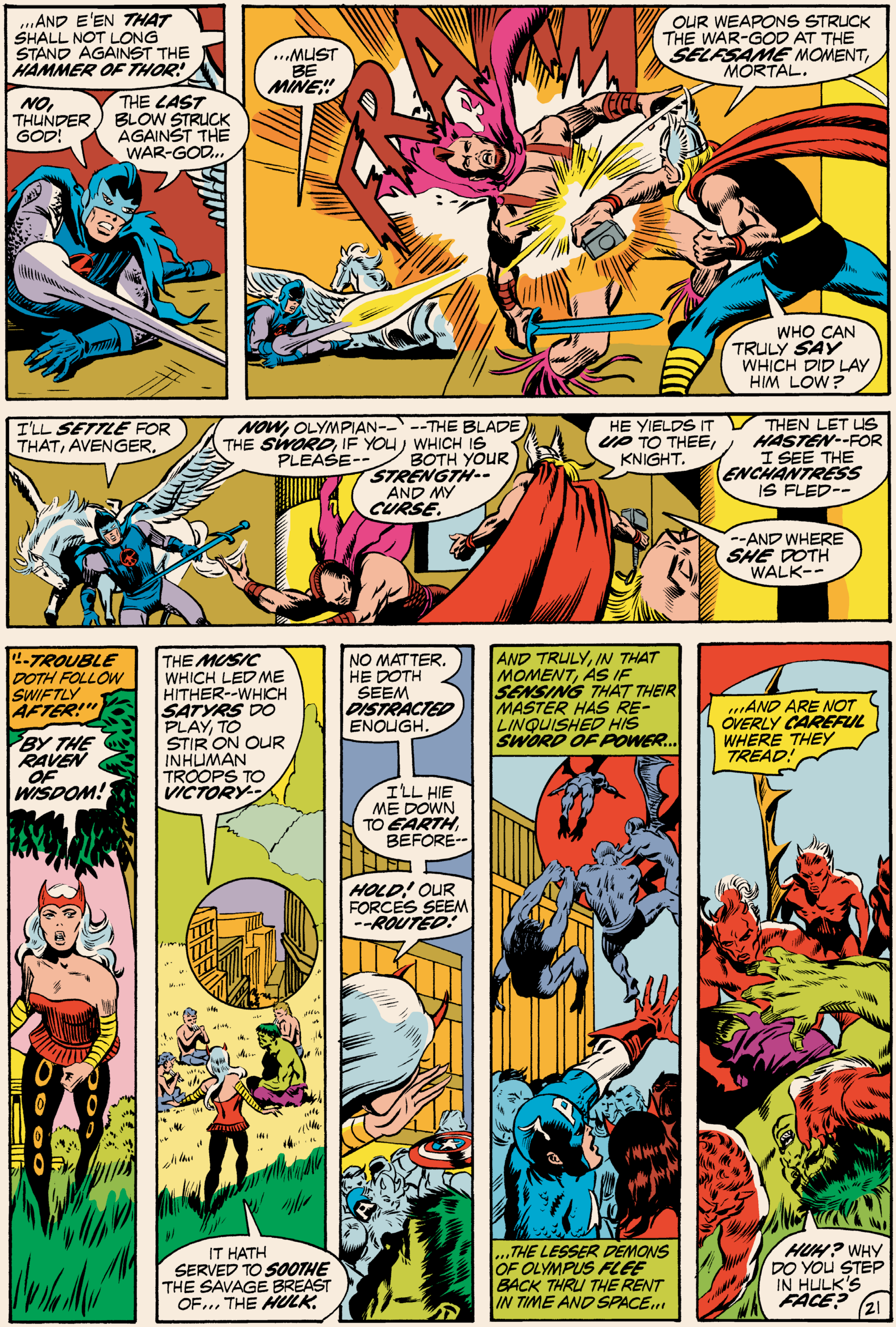

THE MAN-STEED, HOWEVER, DOES NOT LONG ENJOY HIS TRIUMPH...
MY POWER LANCE IS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR THE EBONY BLADE...
BUT, "'TIS ENOUGH... 'TWILL SERVE."
ZAK
HE'S DOWN! BUT I DIDN'T SEE WHERE IRON MAN CRASHED. I'D BETTER--
SLAY HIM! DEATH TO THE ENEMIES OF ARES!
HIS LANCE IS FALLEN, HE IS OURS!
UNHHH!
NOT WHILE I'VE STILL GOT MY FISTS--
--MY FISTS GLOVED IN--
--CHAIN MAIL!
AS, ABOVE...
HERCULES-- BOUND AND GUARDED!
ENTER, FOOLS. I'VE LONG AWAITED YOUR COMING.
RELEASE HIM, WOMAN-- OR SUFFER CONSEQUENCES MOST GRIEVIOUS!
MILADY--SHALL WE ONCE MORE TEACH YON UPSTARTS A LESSON?
UNSHACKLE ME, WENCH-- AND THY LACKEYS SHALL LEARN MORE THEN E'ER THEY TAUGHT.
YOU SPEAK LIKE ONE-- WHO REMEMBERS HIS PAST AGAIN.
AY... FOR ALL THE GOOD IT DOES HIM!
NEITHER YE NOR HE SHALL KEEP OUR MINIONS FROM REACHING ASGARD UNDER COVER OF PROTECTIVE SPELLS...
...AND UNSHEATHING THE DREADED ODINSWORD!
FEMALE MOST FOUL!
'TWILL BRING ON THE DAY OF RAGNAROK!
WHAT CARE I-- WHO HAVE BEEN EXILED BY ODIN, AND SHALL NEVER SHARE HIS DESTINY?
NOR SHALT THOU, THUNDER GOD--FOR I'VE LABORED LONG TO PREPARE THIS DARKSOME SPELL--
--ONE WOVEN 'SPECIALLY TO DESTROY THEE!
16

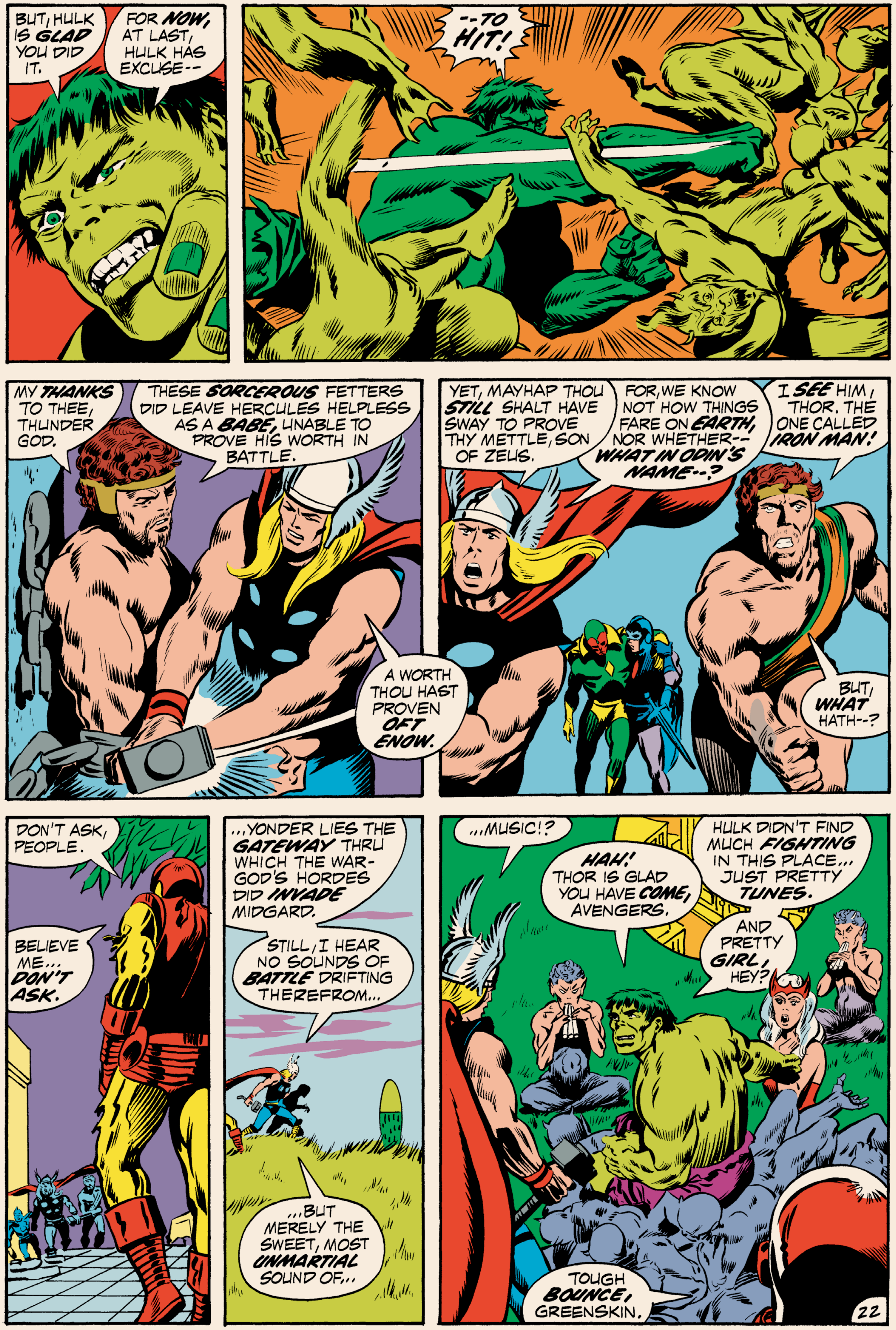

YOU REVEALED TOO MUCH, ENCHANTRESS! FOR, A SPELL DESIGNED EXPLICITLY TO ANNIHILATE A GOD--
--MAY HAVE FAR LESS EFFICACY AGAINST--AN ANDROID.
HE IS FALLEN--YET NOT SLAIN, AS MIGHT I HAVE BEEN.
'TWAS MADNESS E'EN TO CONSIDER IT!
AND THIS BE ONE WHO STOOD ACCUSED OF COWARDICE BY HIS PEERS?
I'VE NO SECOND SPELL TO EQUAL THE FIRST, THOR, AND SO--
KRATOS! BIA! TEAR THE THUNDER GOD TO BITS!!
DO WHAT YE CAN, TITANS!
THOR STANDS BY THE VISION!
WHILE, AT KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET, IN THE HEART OF LONDON...
CAP, ARE YOU SURE THAT--?
OUR INSTRUMENTS SHOWED A SEVERE ATMOSPHERIC DISTURBANCE, WANDA--ONE WHICH--
LOOK! UP THERE--!
GOOD LORD!
BY ARES! THERE BE HUMANS AWAITING US--NOT FLEEING IN STARK FEAR!
NO MATTER! ATTACK, MY BROTHERS!
AND LET OUR WAR-CRY BE--
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
AS THE CLICHE GOES, CAP--I NEEDED THAT!
IT ENABLED ME TO FALL BACK UPON MY REFLEXES.
BUT--WHERE IS HAWKEYE?
UP HERE PLAYIN' "STOP THE MUSIC," PAL--WHERE ELSE?
NICE SHOT, PARTNER! OTHERWISE, THAT SATYR'S PIPES WOULD'VE SAPPED OUR HUMAN WILLS.
NO SWEAT, CAP! THE WASP WOULD STILL HAVE COME THRU WITH HER, UH... BEE-59'S!
17

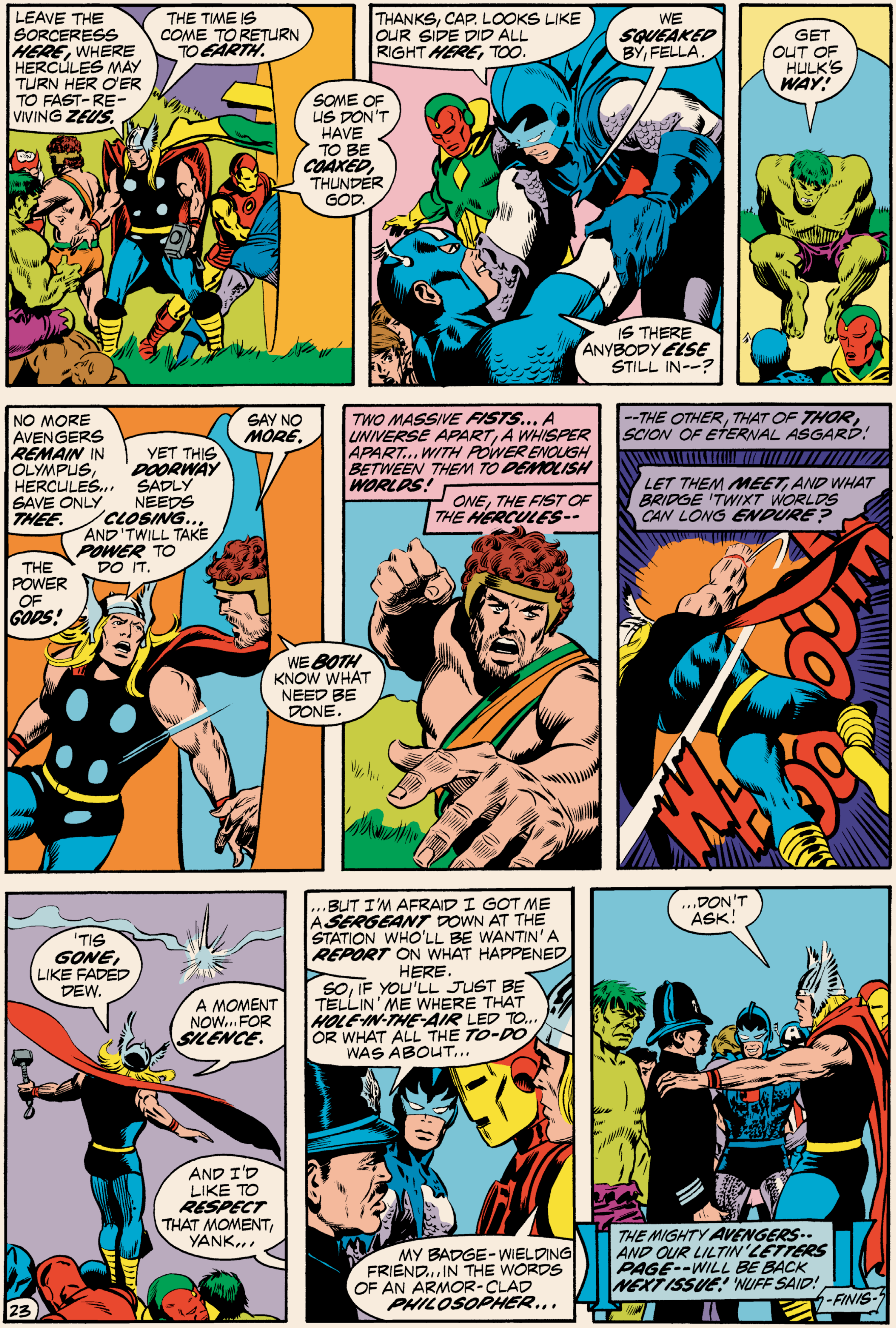

THUS THEY BATTLE, THESE MORTALS CALLED AVENGERS... A BEDAZZLING HANDFUL OF COLORFUL SOULS, AGAINST THE HALF-GOD HORDES OF OLYMPUS...
...ON BEHALF OF A HUMAN POPULACE WHICH FIRST MERELY WATCHES, PUZZLED BY THE CAREENING FORMS AND IGNORANT OF THE STAKES INVOLVED... BUT WHICH THEN SEEMS TO SENSE, SOMEHOW...
GOR! THOSE BLOKES ARE FIGHTING OUR FIGHT!
ALL RIGHT THEN! LET'S HELP THEM, LADS!
...AND JOINS PELL-MELL IN THE FRAY!
THEY'LL BE ALL RIGHT, AS LONG AS WE AVENGERS SEE TO IT...
...THAT THEY REACH ONLY THOSE DEMI-GODS WHO ARE ALREADY WEAKENED.
BUT WHAT OF THE OTHERS? AND WHAT, MOST OF ALL...
...OF THE VISION...?
RRRAP
...THY NAME, BIA, DOTH STAND FOR MIGHT.
KNOW THEE NOW ANOTHER SYNONYM FOR MIGHT...
...THE NAME OF THOR!
AND THOU, KRATOS... WIELDER OF FORCE...
...'TIS NOT A MERE TITAN THOU DOST FACE THIS DAY...
...NOR AN OLYMPIAN IN INNER TURMOIL...
...BUT THE GOD OF THE ROLLING THUNDER!
WHAM
THE LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING!!
NOW, ENCHANTRESS... BEFORE I DO FORGET THOU ART A FEMALE...
WHERE BE HE WHO SOUGHT TO SET ABLAZE THE TORCH OF NUCLEAR WAR?
WHERE BE THE UNHOLY ARES?
SOFTLY, TITAN, SOFTLY... LET US RETRACE OUR STEPS, THE WAY WE DID COME...!
18

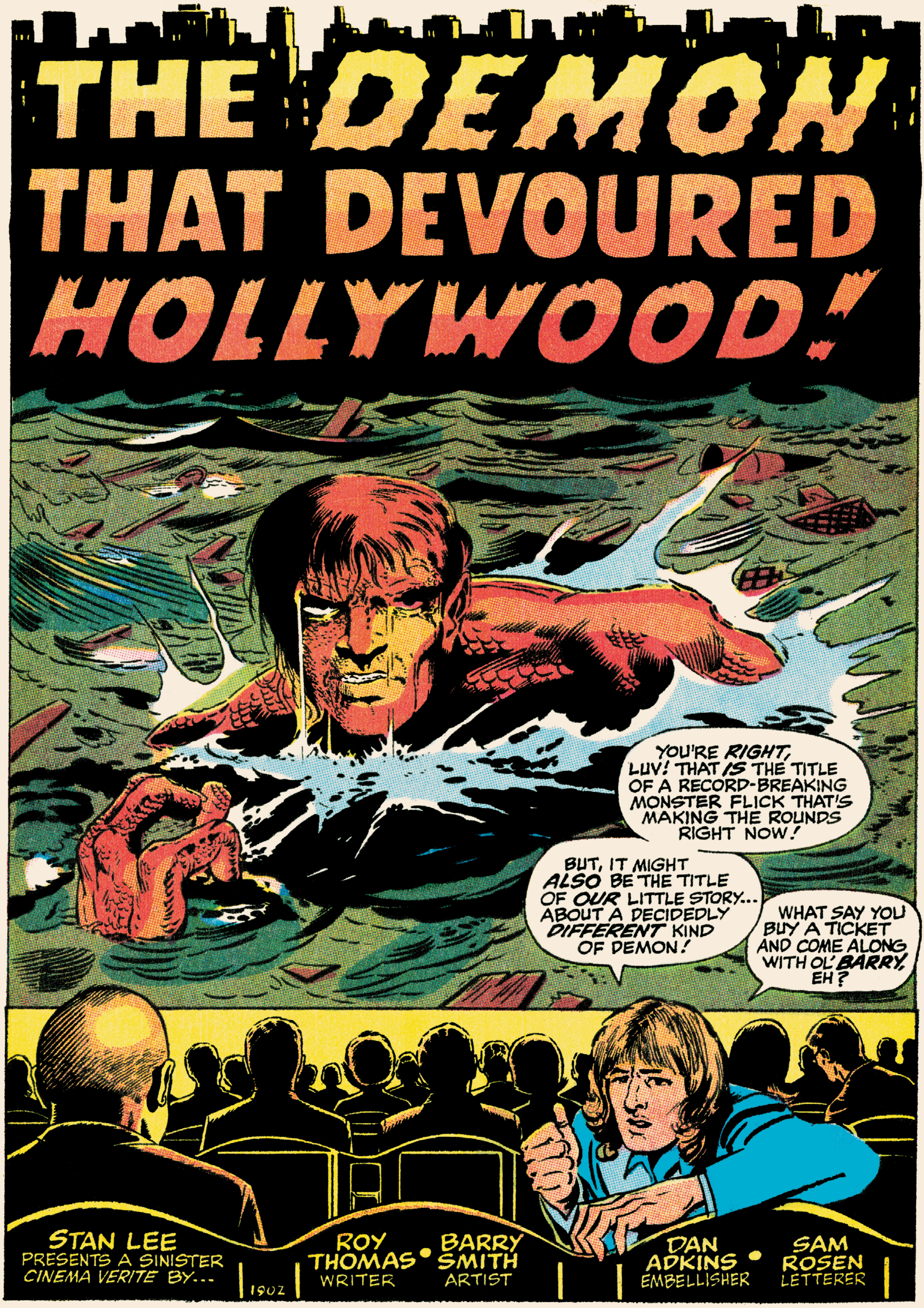

WHATE 'ER THOU SAYEST, SIRE...YET SURELY 'TWOULD BE NOBLER TO--
BY PLUTON'S HOARDS!
STOP WHERE YOU STAND, THIEF!
EH? WHO IS THIS, THAT WOULD COMMAND THE WAR-GOD?
THE RIGHTFUL OWNER OF THE DARK BLADE YOU HOLD IN YOUR HAND, OLYMPIAN.
RELEASE IT--OR FACE THE WRATH OF THE HEIR OF MERLIN!
HAH! KRATOS AND BIA BOTH ARE FALLEN.
YET NOW, MINE EARS DO HEAR NEW STRAINS OF COMBAT.
I'LL GIVE THEE BUT ONE MORE CHANCE, ENCHANTRESS...
WHY DID CRAVEN ARES PLAY THE WAR-HAWK...STRIVING TO CAUSE ATOMIC WARFARE AMONGST MANKIND?
SPEAK, WOMAN--OR BY THE ASGARDIAN BLOOD THOU WOULDST HAVE SEEN SHED, I'LL--
HE--HE KNEW THAT WAS ONE WAY TO OPEN A PATHWAY TO ASGARD'S HALLS.
NOW, HIS MINIONS SEEK OTHER MEANS TO--
OOHHHH--!
THE BLACK KNIGHT--LOCKED IN BATTLE WITH STILL ANOTHER TITAN!
DANE WHITMAN HATH COURAGE--BUT THE FIGHT BE ILL-MATCHED.
MERE MORTALS WERE NE'ER MEANT TO STAND 'GAINST SUCH AS THESE.
AND SO--
--'TIS MYSTIC MJOLNIR MUST BEAR THE BRUNT OF THIS UNEQUAL FRAY!
I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT, THUNDER GOD--AND THANKS.
STILL, I SEE ARES STARTING TO FLEE AGAIN--
BOK
19

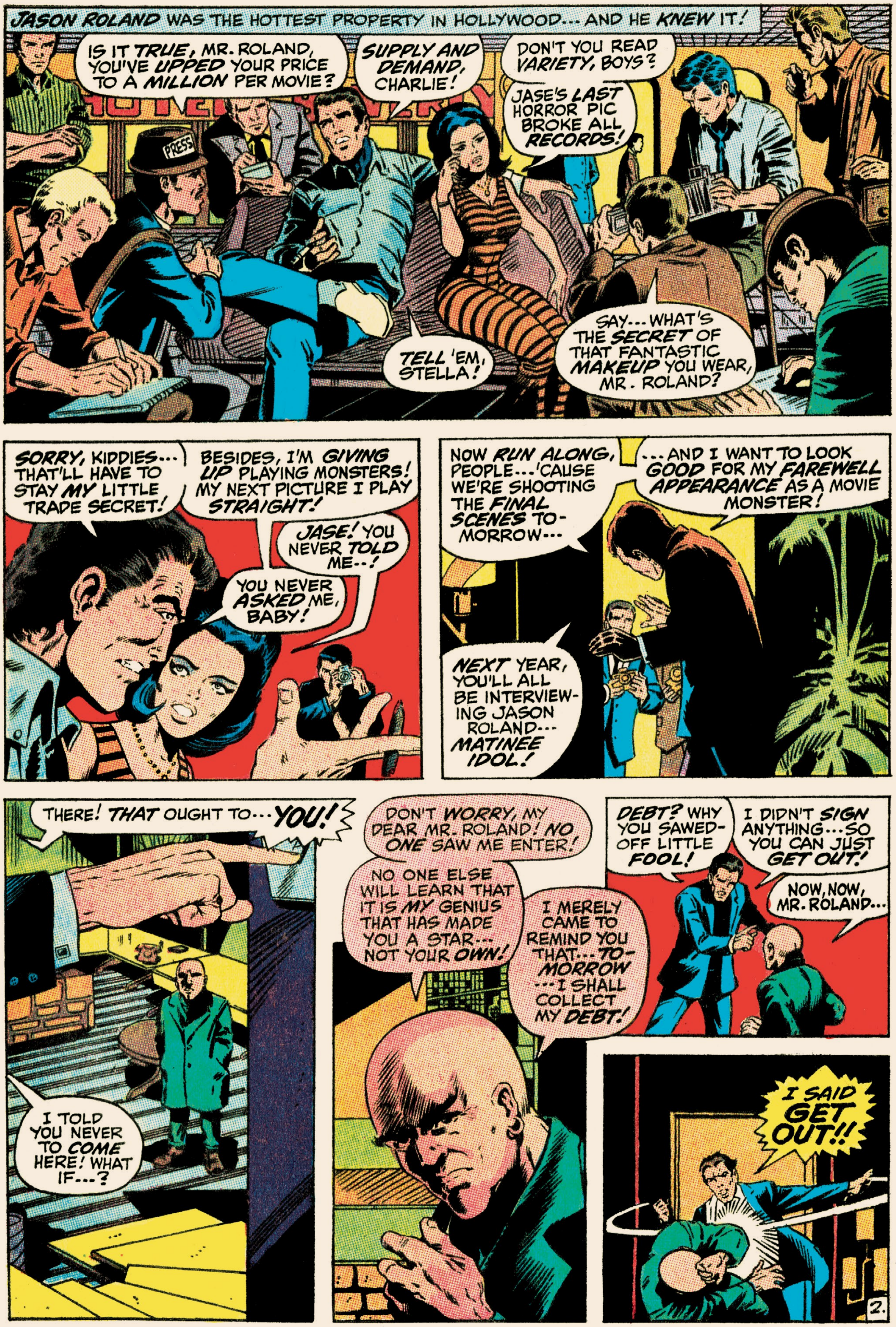

--SOMETHING HE'LL NEVER DO, WHILE I LIVE!
THEN LIVE NO LONGER, FOOL!
EVEN IN OLYMPUS, THOU SHALT FIND--A MORTAL MAY DIE!
...FUNNY PLACE. NOTHING BUT STATUES AROUND. STATUES MADE OUT OF... GLASS.
HUHN? WHAT IS THAT...?
HULK HEARS SOUND. A SOUND LIKE...
...MUSIC.
THOU HAST JOUSTED WITH TITANS, LITTLE ONE...
BUT, THOU SHALT FIND THAT EVEN THE LEAST OF GODS...
UHHNN
--MAY FELL THE MIGHTIEST OF MORTALS!
TRUE ENOW, WARLORD.
YET, WHAT BEFALLS WHEN ONE GOD DOTH FACE ANOTHER?
THAT, ASGARDIAN, WE SOON SHALL LEARN, I TROW.
HAVE AT THEE THEN, KNAVE...
...AND MAY THE DEEPEST, DARKEST PIT OF THINE OWN HADES BE SET ASIDE...
...FOR HIM WHO FIRST CRIES HOLD!
HELLO...
WELL MET, ARES! VERILY, THOU DOST GIVE A BETTER ACCOUNT OF THYSELF THAN THOR DID LOOK FOR.
STILL, 'TIS IN PART THE EBONY BLADE WHICH GIVES THEE THY FIERCENESS...
20

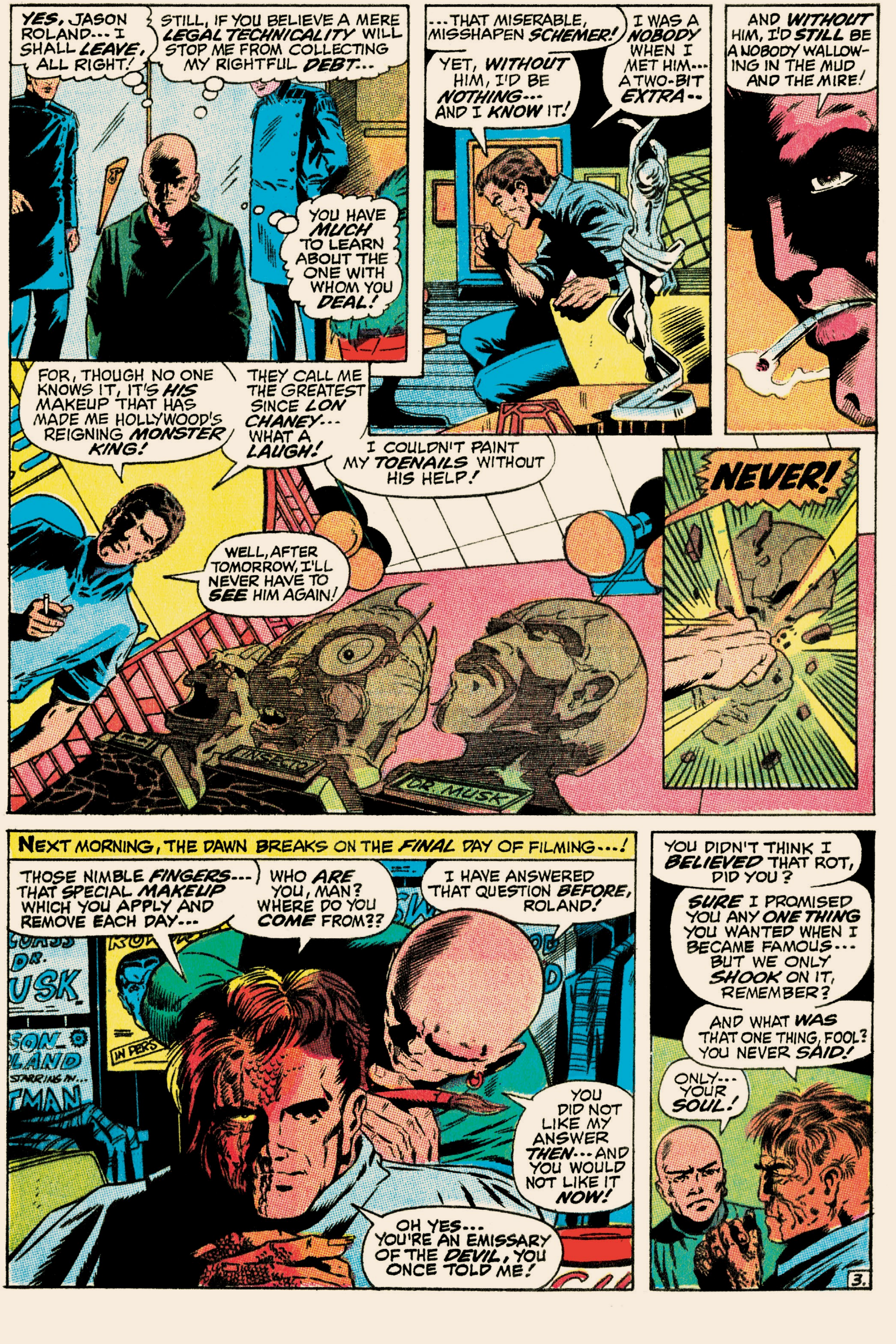

...AND E'EN THAT SHALL NOT LONG STAND AGAINST THE HAMMER OF THOR!
NO, THUNDER GOD!
THE LAST BLOW STRUCK AGAINST THE WAR-GOD...
...MUST BE MINE!!
FRA-A-M
OUR WEAPONS STRUCK THE WAR-GOD AT THE SELFSAME MOMENT, MORTAL.
WHO CAN TRULY SAY WHICH DID LAY HIM LOW?
I'LL SETTLE FOR THAT, AVENGER.
NOW, OLYMPIAN-- THE SWORD, IF YOU PLEASE--
--THE BLADE WHICH IS BOTH YOUR STRENGTH-- AND MY CURSE.
HE YIELDS IT UP TO THEE, KNIGHT.
THEN LET US HASTEN--FOR I SEE THE ENCHANTRESS IS FLED--
--AND WHERE SHE DOTH WALK--
"--TROUBLE DOTH FOLLOW SWIFTLY AFTER!"
BY THE RAVEN OF WISDOM!
THE MUSIC WHICH LED ME HITHER--WHICH SATYRS DO PLAY, TO STIR ON OUR INHUMAN TROOPS TO VICTORY--
IT HATH SERVED TO SOOTHE THE SAVAGE BREAST OF... THE HULK.
NO MATTER. HE DOTH SEEM DISTRACTED ENOUGH.
I'LL HIE ME DOWN TO EARTH, BEFORE--
HOLD! OUR FORCES SEEM --ROUTED!
AND TRULY, IN THAT MOMENT, AS IF SENSING THAT THEIR MASTER HAS RELINQUISHED HIS SWORD OF POWER...
...THE LESSER DEMONS OF OLYMPUS FLEE BACK THRU THE RENT IN TIME AND SPACE...
...AND ARE NOT OVERLY CAREFUL WHERE THEY TREAD!
HUH? WHY DO YOU STEP IN HULK'S FACE?
21

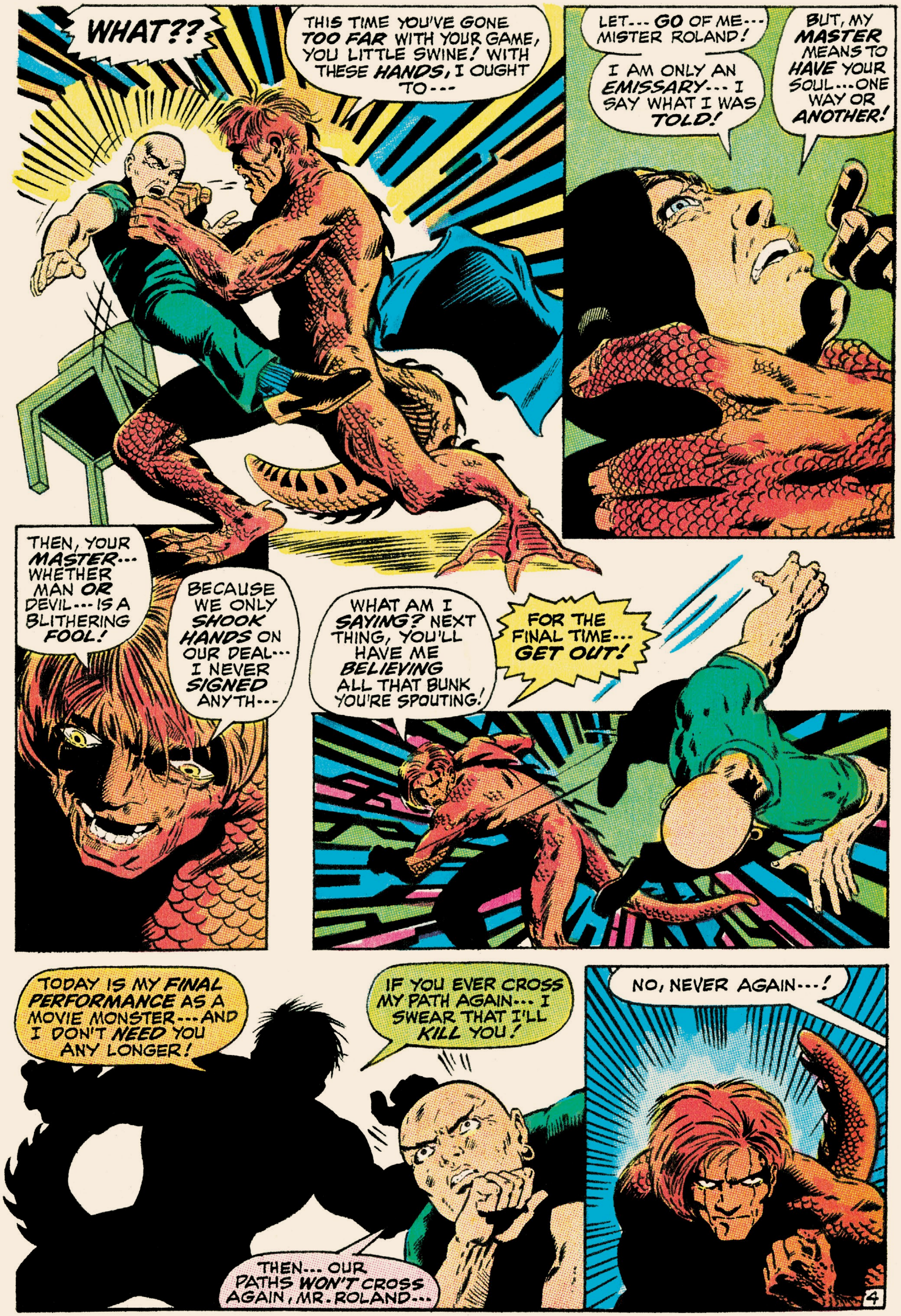

BUT, HULK IS GLAD YOU DID IT.
FOR NOW, AT LAST, HULK HAS EXCUSE--
--TO HIT!
MY THANKS TO THEE, THUNDER GOD.
THESE SORCEROUS FETTERS DID LEAVE HERCULES HELPLESS AS A BABE, UNABLE TO PROVE HIS WORTH IN BATTLE.
A WORTH THOU HAST PROVEN OFT ENOW.
YET, MAYHAP THOU STILL SHALT HAVE SWAY TO PROVE THY METTLE, SON OF ZEUS.
FOR, WE KNOW NOT HOW THINGS FARE ON EARTH, NOR WHETHER-- WHAT IN ODIN'S NAME--?
I SEE HIM, THOR. THE ONE CALLED IRON MAN!
BUT, WHAT HATH--?
DON'T ASK, PEOPLE.
BELIEVE ME... DON'T ASK.
...YONDER LIES THE GATEWAY THRU WHICH THE WAR-GOD'S HORDES DID INVADE MIDGARD.
STILL, I HEAR NO SOUNDS OF BATTLE DRIFTING THEREFROM...
...BUT MERELY THE SWEET, MOST UNMARTIAL SOUND OF...
...MUSIC!?
HAH! THOR IS GLAD YOU HAVE COME, AVENGERS.
HULK DIDN'T FIND MUCH FIGHTING IN THIS PLACE... JUST PRETTY TUNES.
AND PRETTY GIRL, HEY?
TOUGH BOUNCE, GREENSKIN.
22

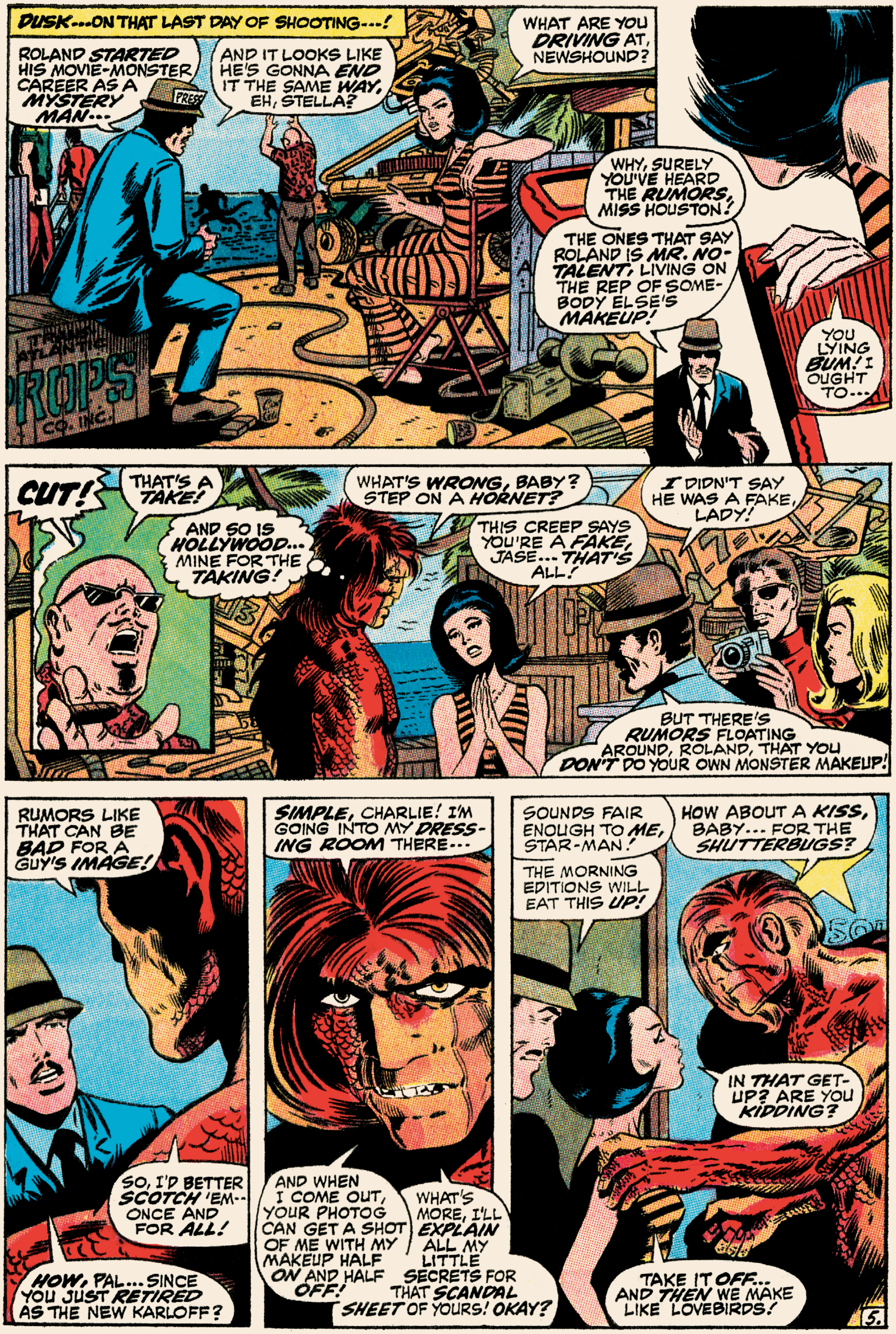

LEAVE THE SORCERESS **HERE**, WHERE HERCULES MAY TURN HER O'ER TO FAST-REVIVING **ZEUS**.
THE TIME IS COME TO RETURN TO **EARTH**.
SOME OF US DON'T HAVE TO BE **COAXED**, THUNDER GOD.
THANKS, CAP. LOOKS LIKE OUR SIDE DID ALL RIGHT **HERE**, TOO.
WE **SQUEAKED** BY, FELLA.
IS THERE ANYBODY **ELSE** STILL IN--?
GET OUT OF HULK'S **WAY**!
NO MORE AVENGERS **REMAIN** IN OLYMPUS, HERCULES... SAVE ONLY **THEE**.
SAY NO **MORE**.
YET THIS **DOORWAY** SADLY NEEDS **CLOSING**... AND 'TWILL TAKE **POWER** TO DO IT.
THE POWER OF **GODS**!
WE **BOTH** KNOW WHAT NEED BE DONE.
TWO MASSIVE **FISTS**... A UNIVERSE APART, A WHISPER APART... WITH POWER ENOUGH BETWEEN THEM TO **DEMOLISH WORLDS**!
ONE, THE FIST OF THE **HERCULES**--
--THE OTHER, THAT OF **THOR**, SCION OF ETERNAL ASGARD!
LET THEM **MEET**, AND WHAT BRIDGE 'TWIXT WORLDS CAN LONG **ENDURE**?
WHOOOM
'TIS **GONE**, LIKE FADED DEW.
A MOMENT NOW... FOR **SILENCE**.
AND I'D LIKE TO **RESPECT** THAT MOMENT, YANK...
23
...BUT I'M AFRAID I GOT ME A **SERGEANT** DOWN AT THE STATION WHO'LL BE WANTIN' A **REPORT** ON WHAT HAPPENED HERE.
SO, IF YOU'LL JUST BE TELLIN' ME WHERE THAT **HOLE-IN-THE-AIR** LED TO... OR WHAT ALL THE **TO-DO** WAS ABOUT...
MY BADGE-WIELDING FRIEND... IN THE WORDS OF AN ARMOR-CLAD **PHILOSOPHER**...
...DON'T ASK!
THE MIGHTY **AVENGERS**.. AND OUR LILTIN' **LETTERS PAGE**--WILL BE BACK **NEXT ISSUE**! 'NUFF SAID!
-FINIS-

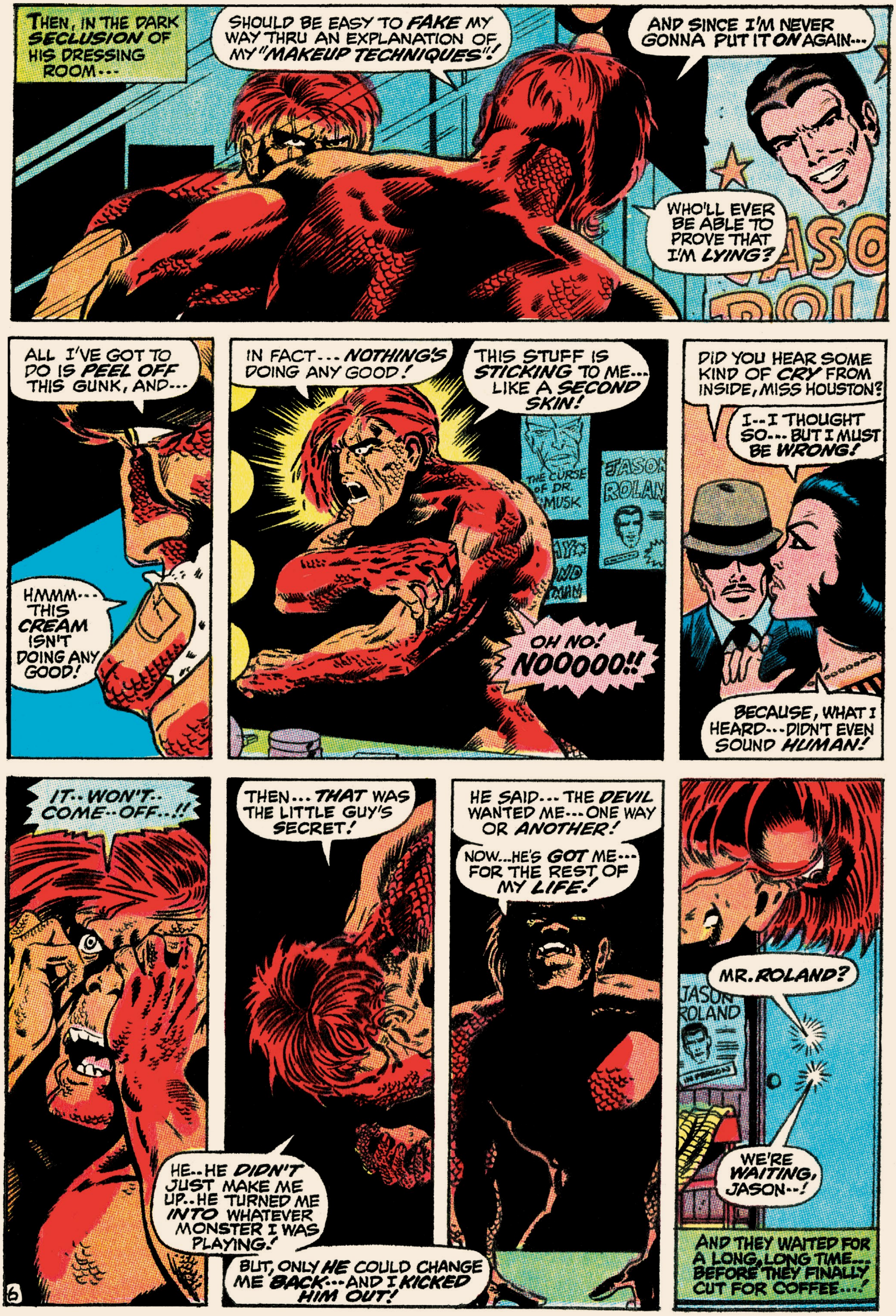

THE DEMON THAT DEVOURED HOLLYWOOD!
YOU'RE RIGHT, LUV! THAT IS THE TITLE OF A RECORD-BREAKING MONSTER FLICK THAT'S MAKING THE ROUNDS RIGHT NOW!
BUT, IT MIGHT ALSO BE THE TITLE OF OUR LITTLE STORY... ABOUT A DECIDEDLY DIFFERENT KIND OF DEMON!
WHAT SAY YOU BUY A TICKET AND COME ALONG WITH OL' BARRY, EH?
STAN LEE PRESENTS A SINISTER CINEMA VERITE BY...
1902
ROY THOMAS WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
DAN ADKINS EMBELLISHER
SAM ROSEN LETTERER

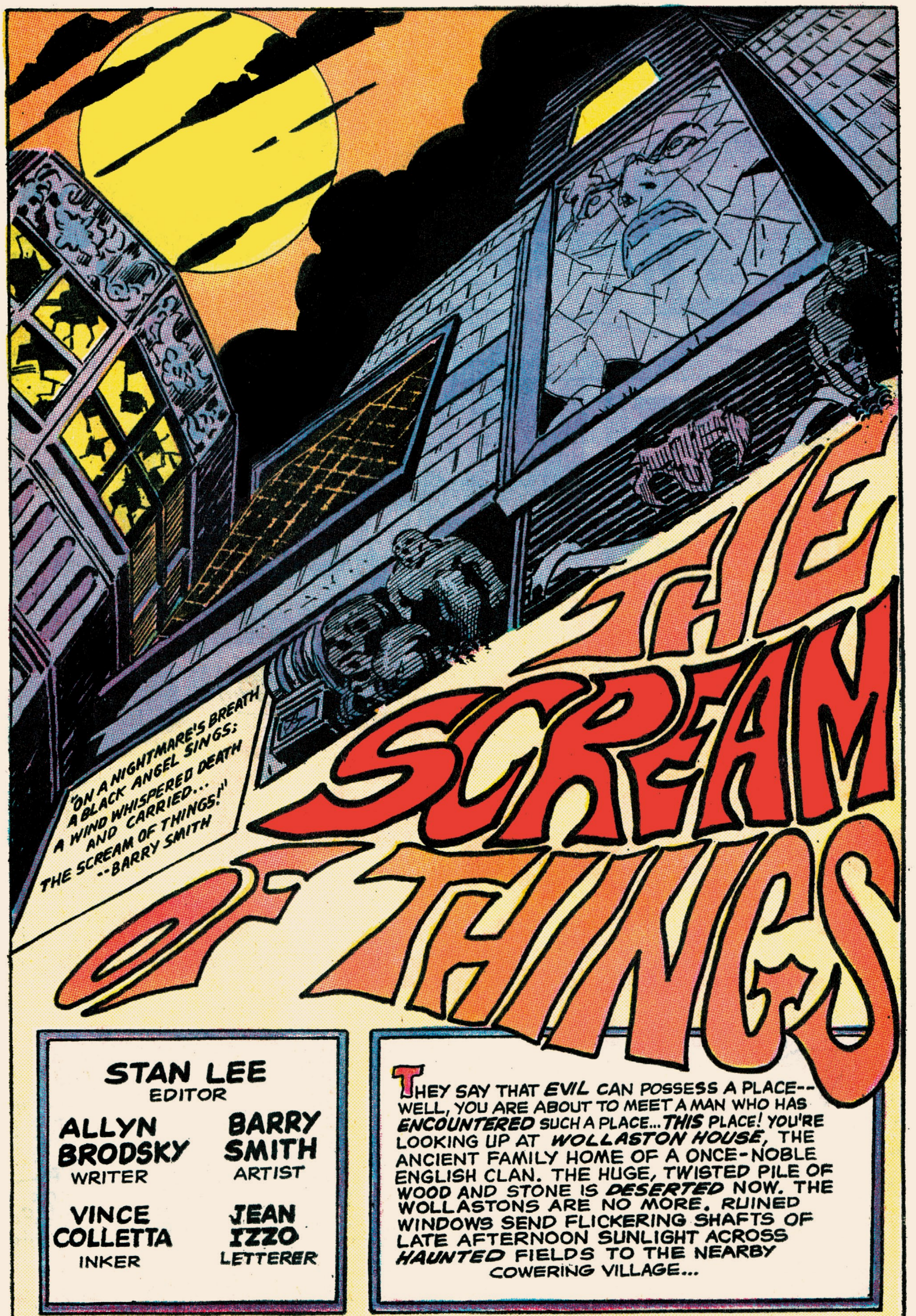

JASON ROLAND WAS THE HOTTEST PROPERTY IN HOLLYWOOD... AND HE KNEW IT!
IS IT TRUE, MR. ROLAND, YOU'VE UPPED YOUR PRICE TO A MILLION PER MOVIE?
SUPPLY AND DEMAND, CHARLIE!
DON'T YOU READ VARIETY, BOYS?
JASE'S LAST HORROR PIC BROKE ALL RECORDS!
PRESS
TELL 'EM, STELLA!
SAY... WHAT'S THE SECRET OF THAT FANTASTIC MAKEUP YOU WEAR, MR. ROLAND?
SORRY, KIDDIES... THAT'LL HAVE TO STAY MY LITTLE TRADE SECRET!
BESIDES, I'M GIVING UP PLAYING MONSTERS! MY NEXT PICTURE I PLAY STRAIGHT!
JASE! YOU NEVER TOLD ME--!
YOU NEVER ASKED ME, BABY!
NOW RUN ALONG, PEOPLE... 'CAUSE WE'RE SHOOTING THE FINAL SCENES TO-MORROW...
...AND I WANT TO LOOK GOOD FOR MY FAREWELL APPEARANCE AS A MOVIE MONSTER!
NEXT YEAR, YOU'LL ALL BE INTERVIEWING JASON ROLAND... MATINEE IDOL!
THERE! THAT OUGHT TO... YOU!
I TOLD YOU NEVER TO COME HERE! WHAT IF...?
DON'T WORRY, MY DEAR MR. ROLAND! NO ONE SAW ME ENTER!
NO ONE ELSE WILL LEARN THAT IT IS MY GENIUS THAT HAS MADE YOU A STAR... NOT YOUR OWN!
I MERELY CAME TO REMIND YOU THAT... TO-MORROW... I SHALL COLLECT MY DEBT!
DEBT? WHY YOU SAWED-OFF LITTLE FOOL!
I DIDN'T SIGN ANYTHING... SO YOU CAN JUST GET OUT!
NOW, NOW, MR. ROLAND...
I SAID GET OUT!!
2.

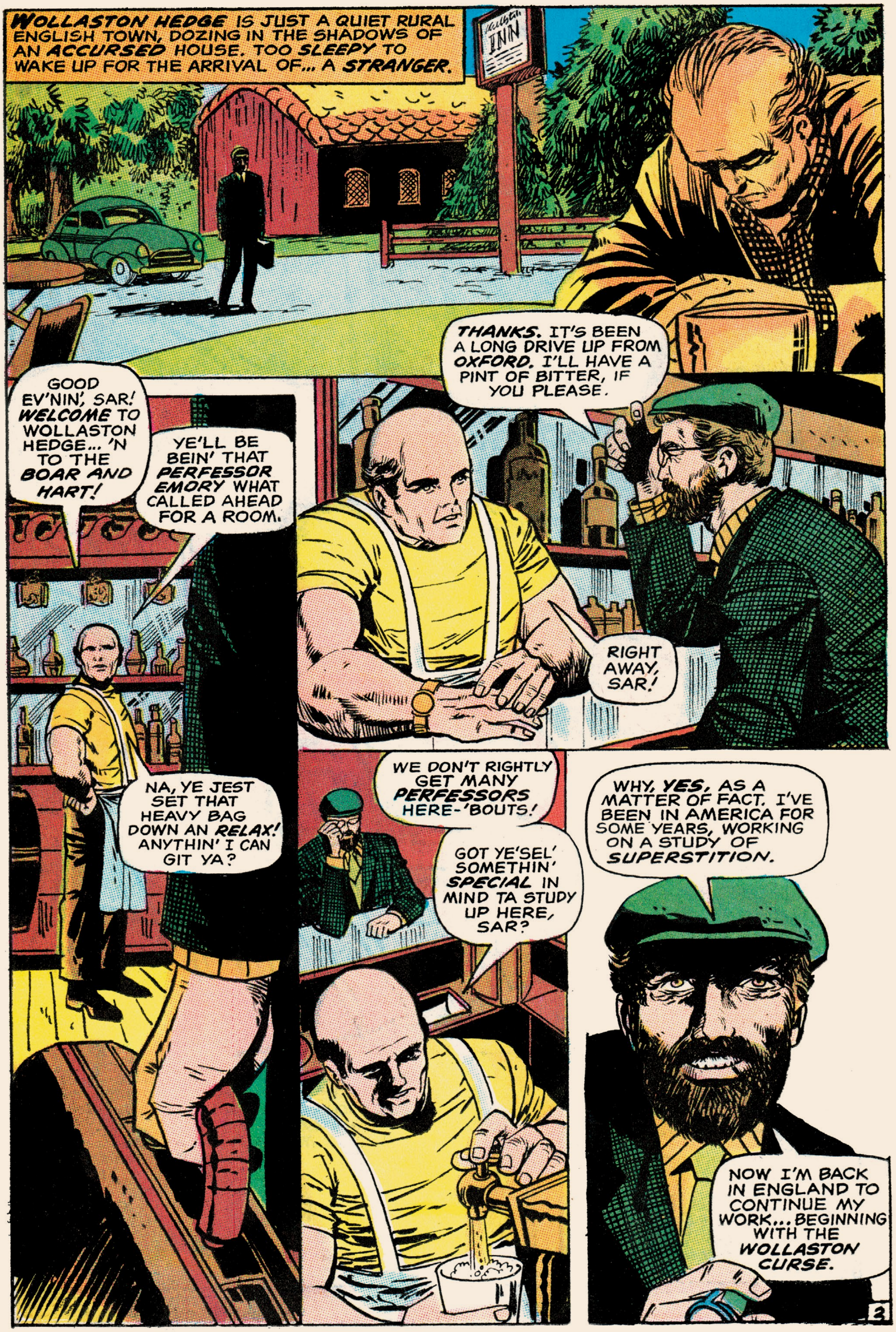

YES, JASON ROLAND... I SHALL LEAVE, ALL RIGHT!
STILL, IF YOU BELIEVE A MERE LEGAL TECHNICALITY WILL STOP ME FROM COLLECTING MY RIGHTFUL DEBT...
YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT THE ONE WITH WHOM YOU DEAL!
...THAT MISERABLE, MISSHAPEN SCHEMER!
YET, WITHOUT HIM, I'D BE NOTHING... AND I KNOW IT!
I WAS A NOBODY WHEN I MET HIM... A TWO-BIT EXTRA--
AND WITHOUT HIM, I'D STILL BE A NOBODY WALLOWING IN THE MUD AND THE MIRE!
FOR, THOUGH NO ONE KNOWS IT, IT'S HIS MAKEUP THAT HAS MADE ME HOLLYWOOD'S REIGNING MONSTER KING!
THEY CALL ME THE GREATEST SINCE LON CHANEY... WHAT A LAUGH!
I COULDN'T PAINT MY TOENAILS WITHOUT HIS HELP!
WELL, AFTER TOMORROW, I'LL NEVER HAVE TO SEE HIM AGAIN!
INSECTO
DR. MUSK
NEVER!
NEXT MORNING, THE DAWN BREAKS ON THE FINAL DAY OF FILMING...!
THOSE NIMBLE FINGERS... THAT SPECIAL MAKEUP WHICH YOU APPLY AND REMOVE EACH DAY...
WHO ARE YOU, MAN? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM??
I HAVE ANSWERED THAT QUESTION BEFORE, ROLAND!
YOU DID NOT LIKE MY ANSWER THEN... AND YOU WOULD NOT LIKE IT NOW!
OH YES... YOU'RE AN EMISSARY OF THE DEVIL, YOU ONCE TOLD ME!
YOU DIDN'T THINK I BELIEVED THAT ROT, DID YOU?
SURE I PROMISED YOU ANY ONE THING YOU WANTED WHEN I BECAME FAMOUS... BUT WE ONLY SHOOK ON IT, REMEMBER?
AND WHAT WAS THAT ONE THING, FOOL? YOU NEVER SAID!
ONLY... YOUR SOUL!
3.

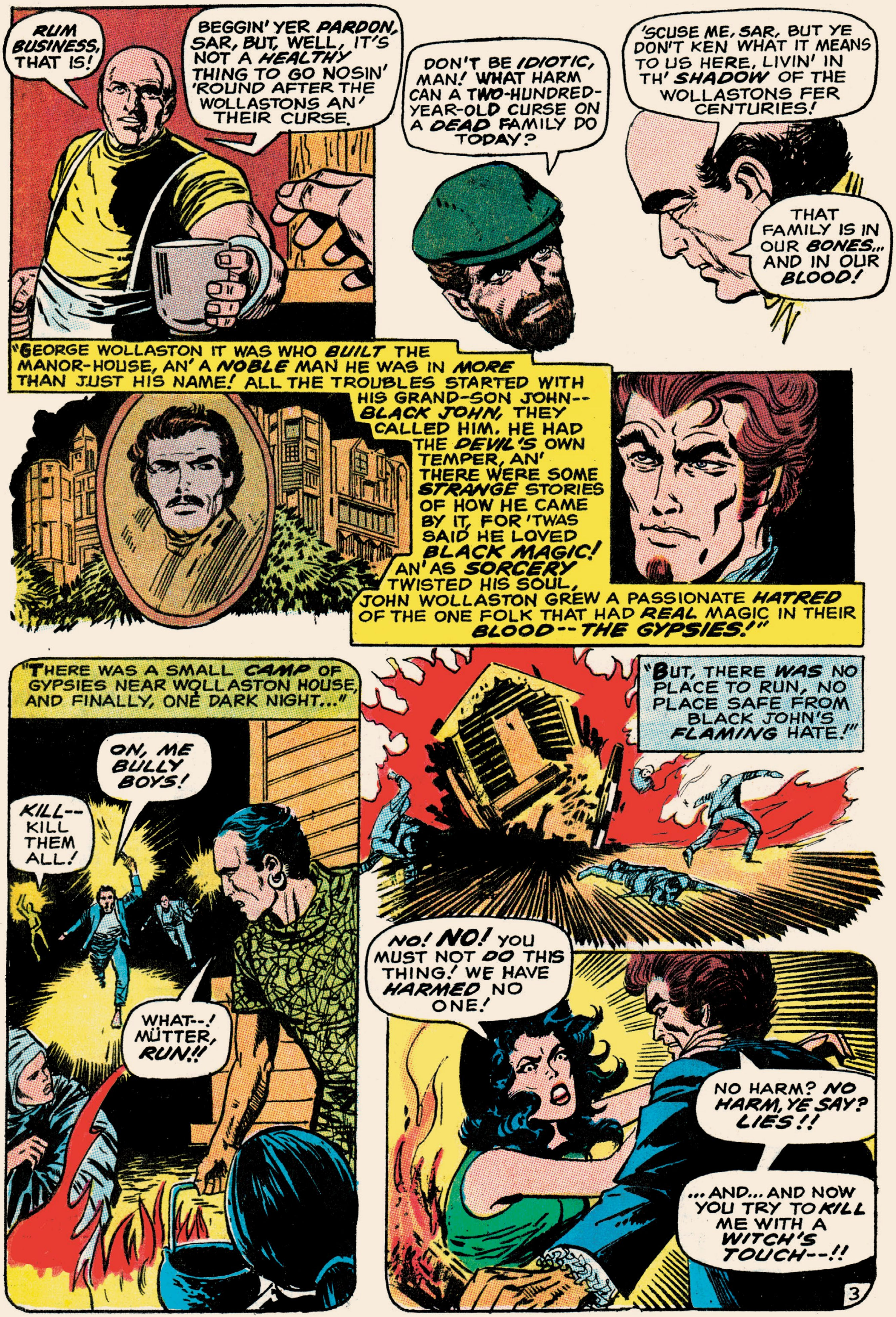

WHAT??
THIS TIME YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR WITH YOUR GAME, YOU LITTLE SWINE! WITH THESE HANDS, I OUGHT TO---
LET--- GO OF ME--- MISTER ROLAND!
I AM ONLY AN EMISSARY--- I SAY WHAT I WAS TOLD!
BUT, MY MASTER MEANS TO HAVE YOUR SOUL...ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!
THEN, YOUR MASTER--- WHETHER MAN OR DEVIL---IS A BLITHERING FOOL!
BECAUSE WE ONLY SHOOK HANDS ON OUR DEAL--- I NEVER SIGNED ANYTH---
WHAT AM I SAYING? NEXT THING, YOU'LL HAVE ME BELIEVING ALL THAT BUNK YOU'RE SPOUTING!
FOR THE FINAL TIME--- GET OUT!
TODAY IS MY FINAL PERFORMANCE AS A MOVIE MONSTER---AND I DON'T NEED YOU ANY LONGER!
IF YOU EVER CROSS MY PATH AGAIN--- I SWEAR THAT I'LL KILL YOU!
THEN--- OUR PATHS WON'T CROSS AGAIN, MR. ROLAND---
NO, NEVER AGAIN---!
4

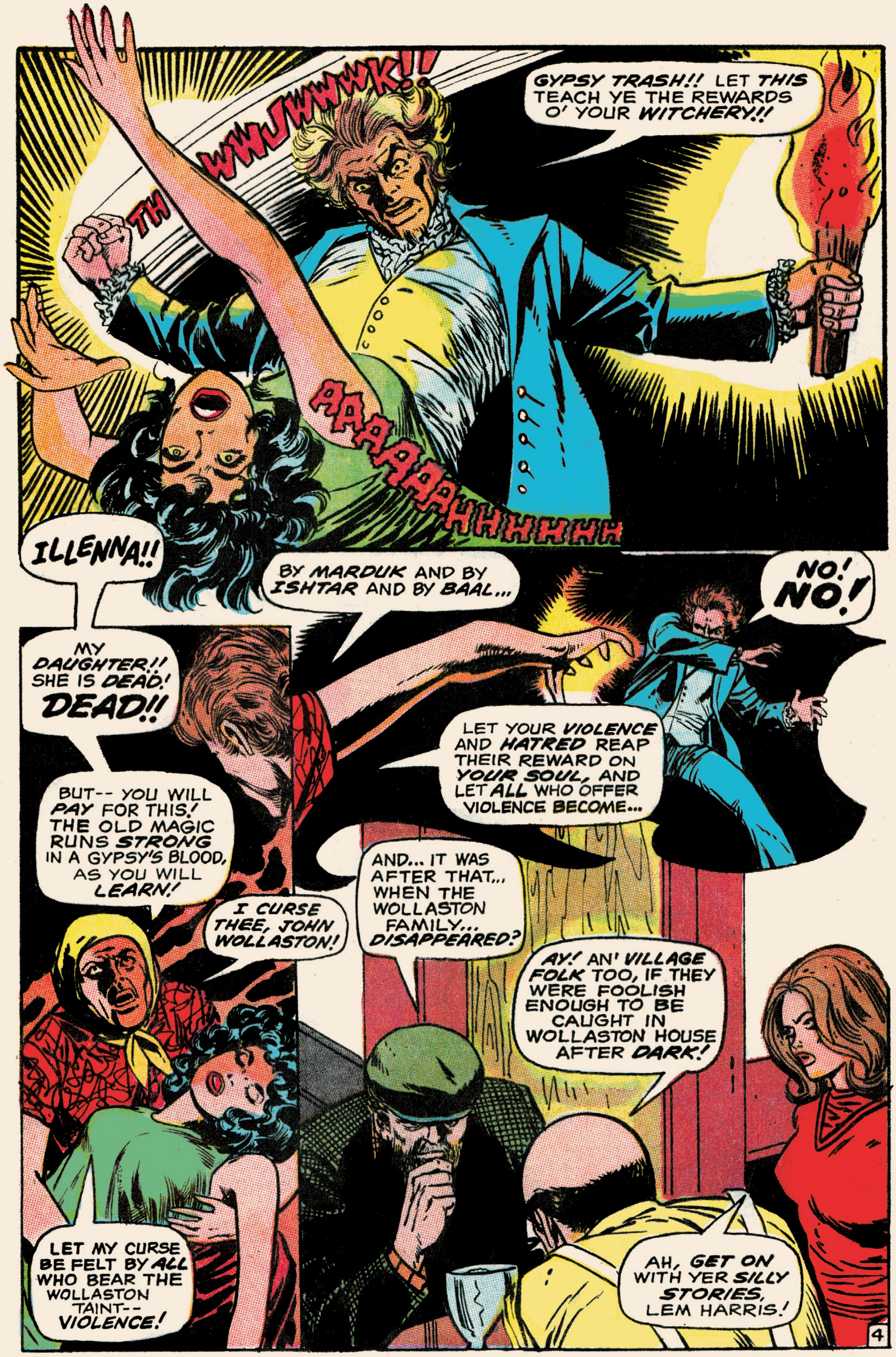

DUSK---ON THAT LAST DAY OF SHOOTING---!
ROLAND STARTED HIS MOVIE-MONSTER CAREER AS A MYSTERY MAN---
PRESS
AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S GONNA END IT THE SAME WAY, EH, STELLA?
WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT, NEWSHOUND?
TRANS ATLANTIC PROPS CO. INC.
WHY, SURELY YOU'VE HEARD THE RUMORS, MISS HOUSTON!
THE ONES THAT SAY ROLAND IS MR. NO-TALENT, LIVING ON THE REP OF SOMEBODY ELSE'S MAKEUP!
YOU LYING BUM! I OUGHT TO---
CUT!
THAT'S A TAKE!
AND SO IS HOLLYWOOD... MINE FOR THE TAKING!
WHAT'S WRONG, BABY? STEP ON A HORNET?
THIS CREEP SAYS YOU'RE A FAKE, JASE... THAT'S ALL!
I DIDN'T SAY HE WAS A FAKE, LADY!
BUT THERE'S RUMORS FLOATING AROUND, ROLAND, THAT YOU DON'T DO YOUR OWN MONSTER MAKEUP!
RUMORS LIKE THAT CAN BE BAD FOR A GUY'S IMAGE!
SO, I'D BETTER SCOTCH 'EM--ONCE AND FOR ALL!
HOW, PAL... SINCE YOU JUST RETIRED AS THE NEW KARLOFF?
SIMPLE, CHARLIE! I'M GOING INTO MY DRESSING ROOM THERE---
AND WHEN I COME OUT, YOUR PHOTOG CAN GET A SHOT OF ME WITH MY MAKEUP HALF ON AND HALF OFF!
WHAT'S MORE, I'LL EXPLAIN ALL MY LITTLE SECRETS FOR THAT SCANDAL SHEET OF YOURS! OKAY?
SOUNDS FAIR ENOUGH TO ME, STAR-MAN!
THE MORNING EDITIONS WILL EAT THIS UP!
HOW ABOUT A KISS, BABY... FOR THE SHUTTERBUGS?
IN THAT GET-UP? ARE YOU KIDDING?
TAKE IT OFF... AND THEN WE MAKE LIKE LOVEBIRDS!
5.

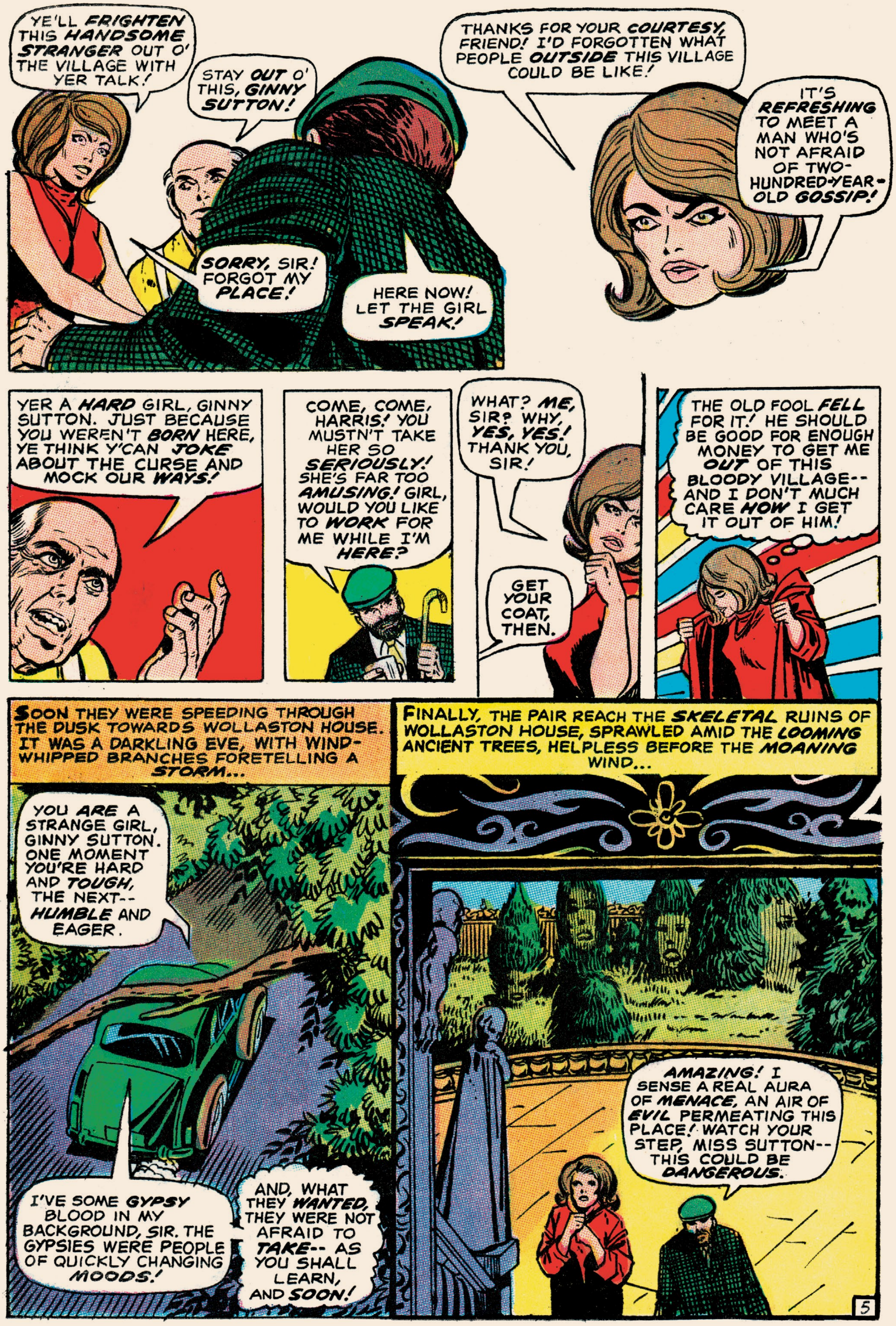

THEN, IN THE DARK SECLUSION OF HIS DRESSING ROOM...
SHOULD BE EASY TO FAKE MY WAY THRU AN EXPLANATION OF MY "MAKEUP TECHNIQUES"!
AND SINCE I'M NEVER GONNA PUT IT ON AGAIN...
WHO'LL EVER BE ABLE TO PROVE THAT I'M LYING?
JASO ROL
ALL I'VE GOT TO DO IS PEEL OFF THIS GUNK, AND...
HMMM... THIS CREAM ISN'T DOING ANY GOOD!
IN FACT... NOTHING'S DOING ANY GOOD!
THIS STUFF IS STICKING TO ME... LIKE A SECOND SKIN!
THE CURSE OF DR. MUSK
JASON ROLAN
OH NO! NOOOOO!!
DID YOU HEAR SOME KIND OF CRY FROM INSIDE, MISS HOUSTON?
I--I THOUGHT SO... BUT I MUST BE WRONG!
BECAUSE, WHAT I HEARD... DIDN'T EVEN SOUND HUMAN!
IT.. WON'T.. COME.. OFF..!!
6
THEN... THAT WAS THE LITTLE GUY'S SECRET!
HE..HE DIDN'T JUST MAKE ME UP..HE TURNED ME INTO WHATEVER MONSTER I WAS PLAYING!
HE SAID... THE DEVIL WANTED ME... ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!
NOW...HE'S GOT ME... FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
BUT, ONLY HE COULD CHANGE ME BACK...AND I KICKED HIM OUT!
MR. ROLAND?
JASON ROLAND
IN PERSON
WE'RE WAITING, JASON--!
AND THEY WAITED FOR A LONG, LONG TIME... BEFORE THEY FINALLY CUT FOR COFFEE...!

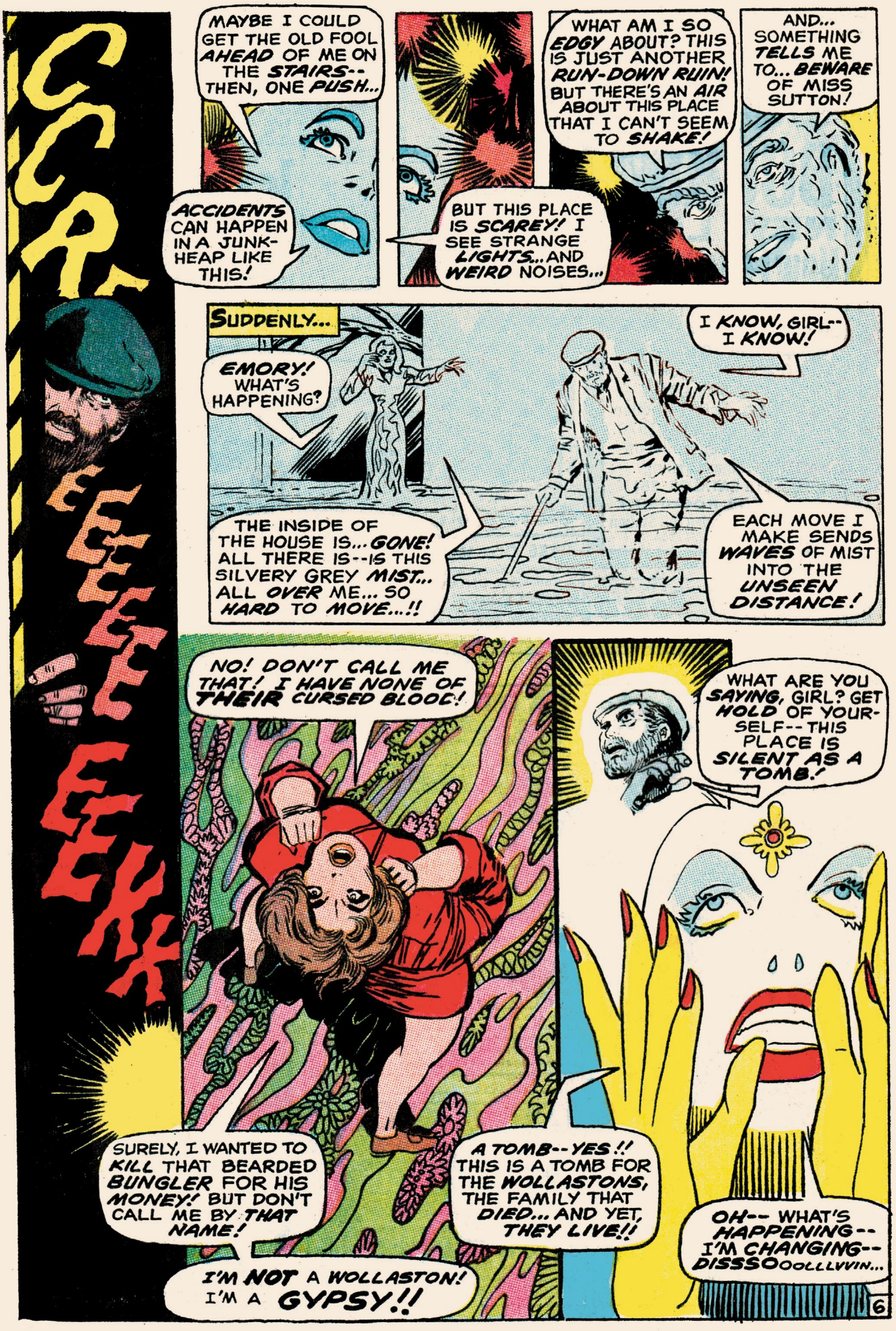

"ON A NIGHTMARE'S BREATH A BLACK ANGEL SINGS; A WIND WHISPERED DEATH AND CARRIED... THE SCREAM OF THINGS!" --BARRY SMITH
THE SCREAM OF THINGS
STAN LEE EDITOR
ALLYN BRODSKY WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
VINCE COLLETTA INKER
JEAN IZZO LETTERER
THEY SAY THAT EVIL CAN POSSESS A PLACE-- WELL, YOU ARE ABOUT TO MEET A MAN WHO HAS ENCOUNTERED SUCH A PLACE... THIS PLACE! YOU'RE LOOKING UP AT WOLLASTON HOUSE, THE ANCIENT FAMILY HOME OF A ONCE-NOBLE ENGLISH CLAN. THE HUGE, TWISTED PILE OF WOOD AND STONE IS DESERTED NOW. THE WOLLASTONS ARE NO MORE. RUINED WINDOWS SEND FLICKERING SHAFTS OF LATE AFTERNOON SUNLIGHT ACROSS HAUNTED FIELDS TO THE NEARBY COWERING VILLAGE...

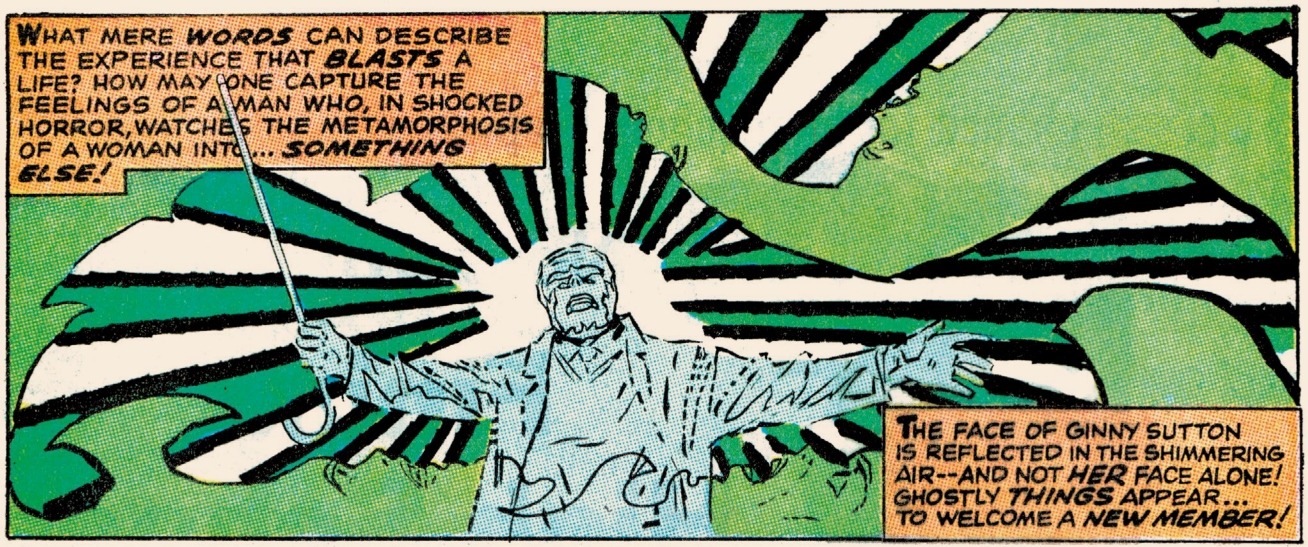

WOLLASTON HEDGE IS JUST A QUIET RURAL ENGLISH TOWN, DOZING IN THE SHADOWS OF AN ACCURSED HOUSE, TOO SLEEPY TO WAKE UP FOR THE ARRIVAL OF... A STRANGER.
INN
GOOD EV'NIN', SAR! WELCOME TO WOLLASTON HEDGE... 'N TO THE BOAR AND HART!
YE'LL BE BEIN' THAT PERFESSOR EMORY WHAT CALLED AHEAD FOR A ROOM.
NA, YE JEST SET THAT HEAVY BAG DOWN AN RELAX! ANYTHIN' I CAN GIT YA?
THANKS. IT'S BEEN A LONG DRIVE UP FROM OXFORD. I'LL HAVE A PINT OF BITTER, IF YOU PLEASE.
RIGHT AWAY, SAR!
WE DON'T RIGHTLY GET MANY PERFESSORS HERE-'BOUTS!
GOT YE'SEL' SOMETHIN' SPECIAL IN MIND TA STUDY UP HERE, SAR?
WHY, YES, AS A MATTER OF FACT. I'VE BEEN IN AMERICA FOR SOME YEARS, WORKING ON A STUDY OF SUPERSTITION.
NOW I'M BACK IN ENGLAND TO CONTINUE MY WORK... BEGINNING WITH THE WOLLASTON CURSE.
3

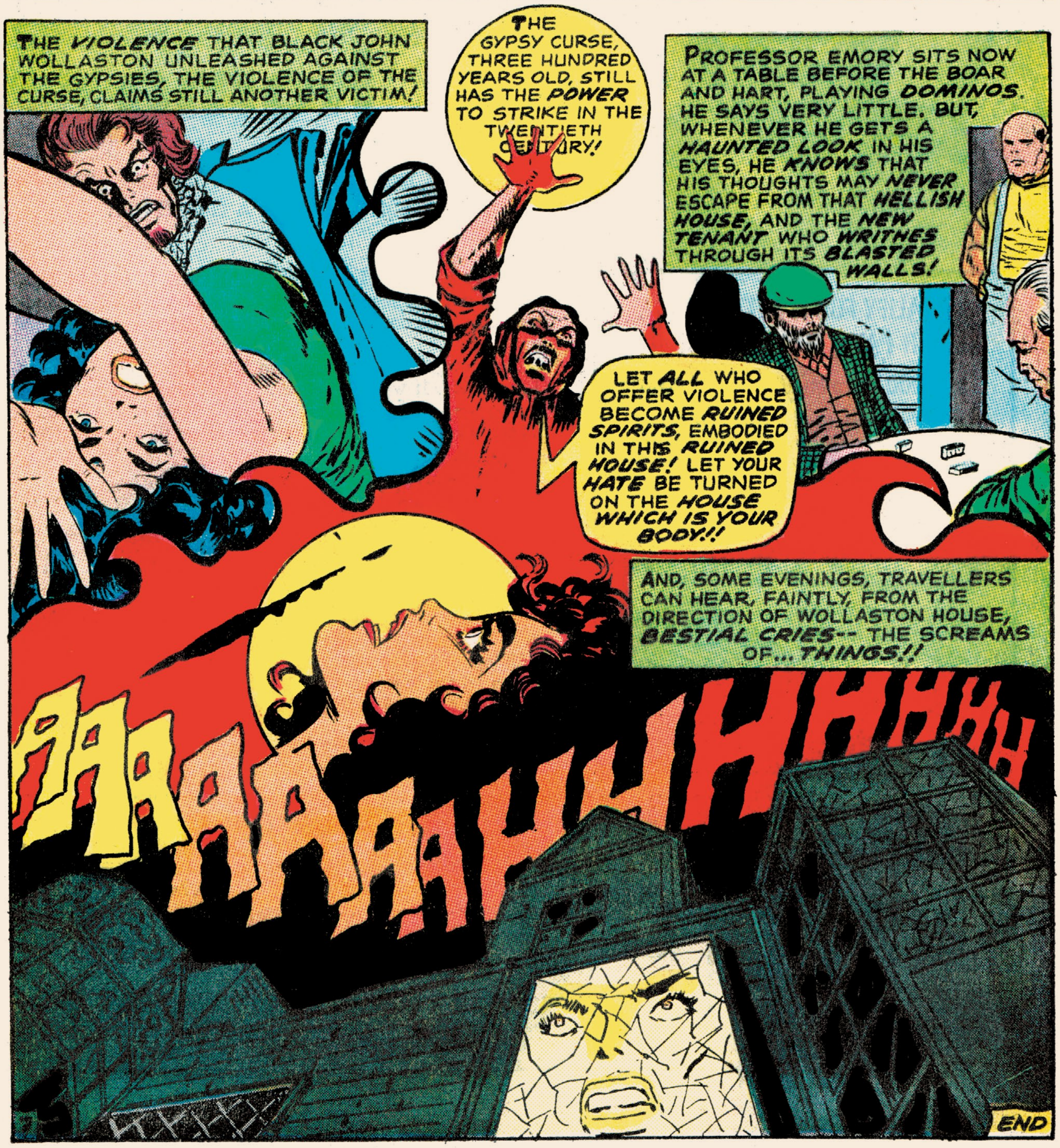

RUM BUSINESS, THAT IS!
BEGGIN' YER PARDON, SAR, BUT, WELL, IT'S NOT A HEALTHY THING TO GO NOSIN' 'ROUND AFTER THE WOLLASTONS AN' THEIR CURSE.
DON'T BE IDIOTIC, MAN! WHAT HARM CAN A TWO-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD CURSE ON A DEAD FAMILY DO TODAY?
'SCUSE ME, SAR, BUT YE DON'T KEN WHAT IT MEANS TO US HERE, LIVIN' IN TH' SHADOW OF THE WOLLASTONS FER CENTURIES!
THAT FAMILY IS IN OUR BONES... AND IN OUR BLOOD!
"GEORGE WOLLASTON IT WAS WHO BUILT THE MANOR-HOUSE, AN' A NOBLE MAN HE WAS IN MORE THAN JUST HIS NAME! ALL THE TROUBLES STARTED WITH HIS GRAND-SON JOHN-- BLACK JOHN, THEY CALLED HIM. HE HAD THE DEVIL'S OWN TEMPER, AN' THERE WERE SOME STRANGE STORIES OF HOW HE CAME BY IT, FOR 'TWAS SAID HE LOVED BLACK MAGIC! AN' AS SORCERY TWISTED HIS SOUL, JOHN WOLLASTON GREW A PASSIONATE HATRED OF THE ONE FOLK THAT HAD REAL MAGIC IN THEIR BLOOD--THE GYPSIES!"
"THERE WAS A SMALL CAMP OF GYPSIES NEAR WOLLASTON HOUSE, AND FINALLY, ONE DARK NIGHT..."
ON, ME BULLY BOYS!
KILL-- KILL THEM ALL!
WHAT--! MÜTTER, RUN!!
"BUT, THERE WAS NO PLACE TO RUN, NO PLACE SAFE FROM BLACK JOHN'S FLAMING HATE!"
NO! NO! YOU MUST NOT DO THIS THING! WE HAVE HARMED NO ONE!
NO HARM? NO HARM, YE SAY? LIES!!
...AND... AND NOW YOU TRY TO KILL ME WITH A WITCH'S TOUCH--!!
3

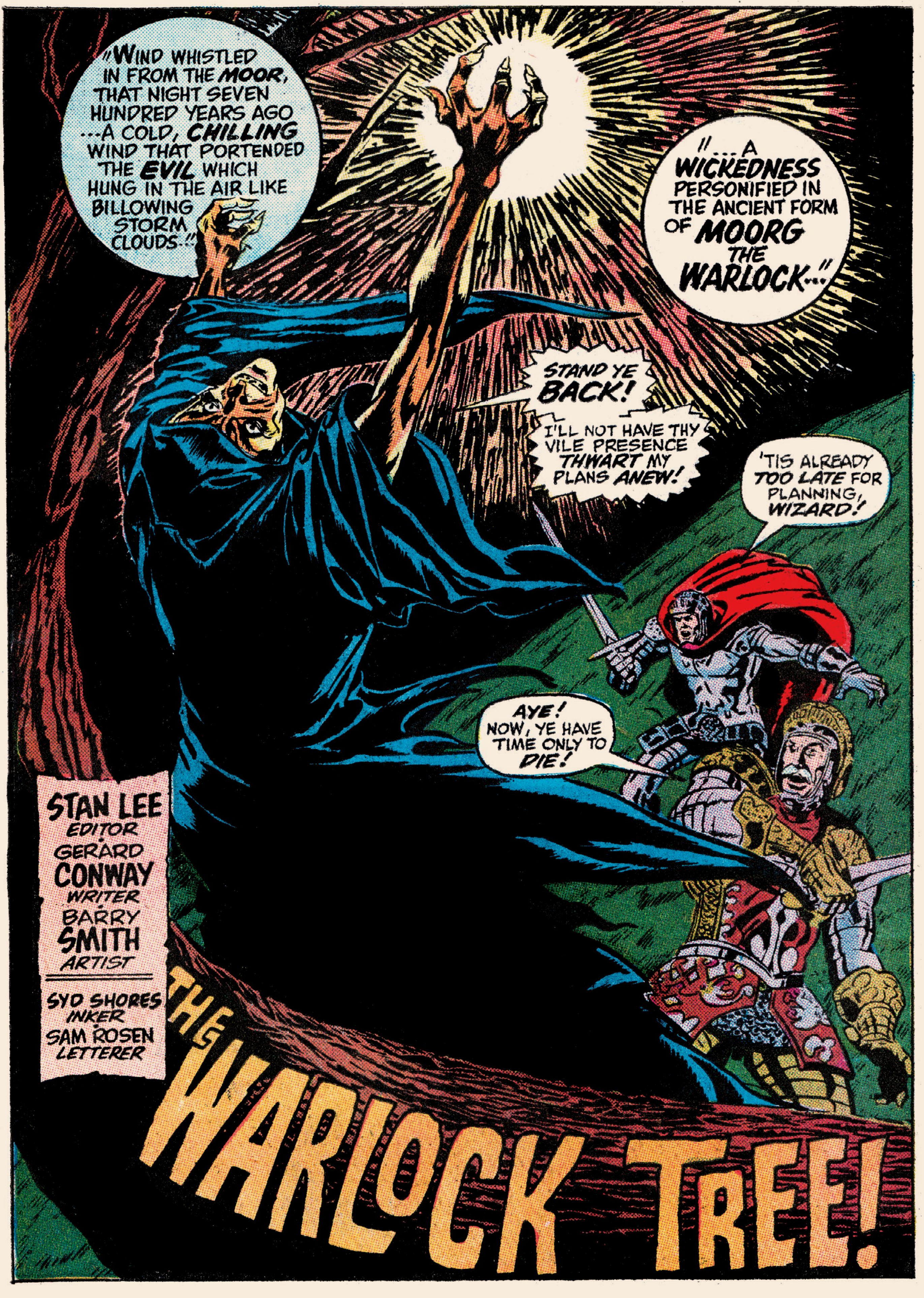

THWWSHWWWK!!
GYPSY TRASH!! LET THIS TEACH YE THE REWARDS O' YOUR WITCHERY!!
AAAAAAHHHHHHH
ILLENNA!!
MY DAUGHTER!! SHE IS DEAD! DEAD!!
BUT-- YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS! THE OLD MAGIC RUNS STRONG IN A GYPSY'S BLOOD, AS YOU WILL LEARN!
I CURSE THEE, JOHN WOLLASTON!
BY MARDUK AND BY ISHTAR AND BY BAAL...
NO! NO!
LET YOUR VIOLENCE AND HATRED REAP THEIR REWARD ON YOUR SOUL, AND LET ALL WHO OFFER VIOLENCE BECOME...
LET MY CURSE BE FELT BY ALL WHO BEAR THE WOLLASTON TAINT-- VIOLENCE!
AND... IT WAS AFTER THAT... WHEN THE WOLLASTON FAMILY... DISAPPEARED?
AY! AN' VILLAGE FOLK TOO, IF THEY WERE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO BE CAUGHT IN WOLLASTON HOUSE AFTER DARK!
AH, GET ON WITH YER SILLY STORIES, LEM HARRIS!
4

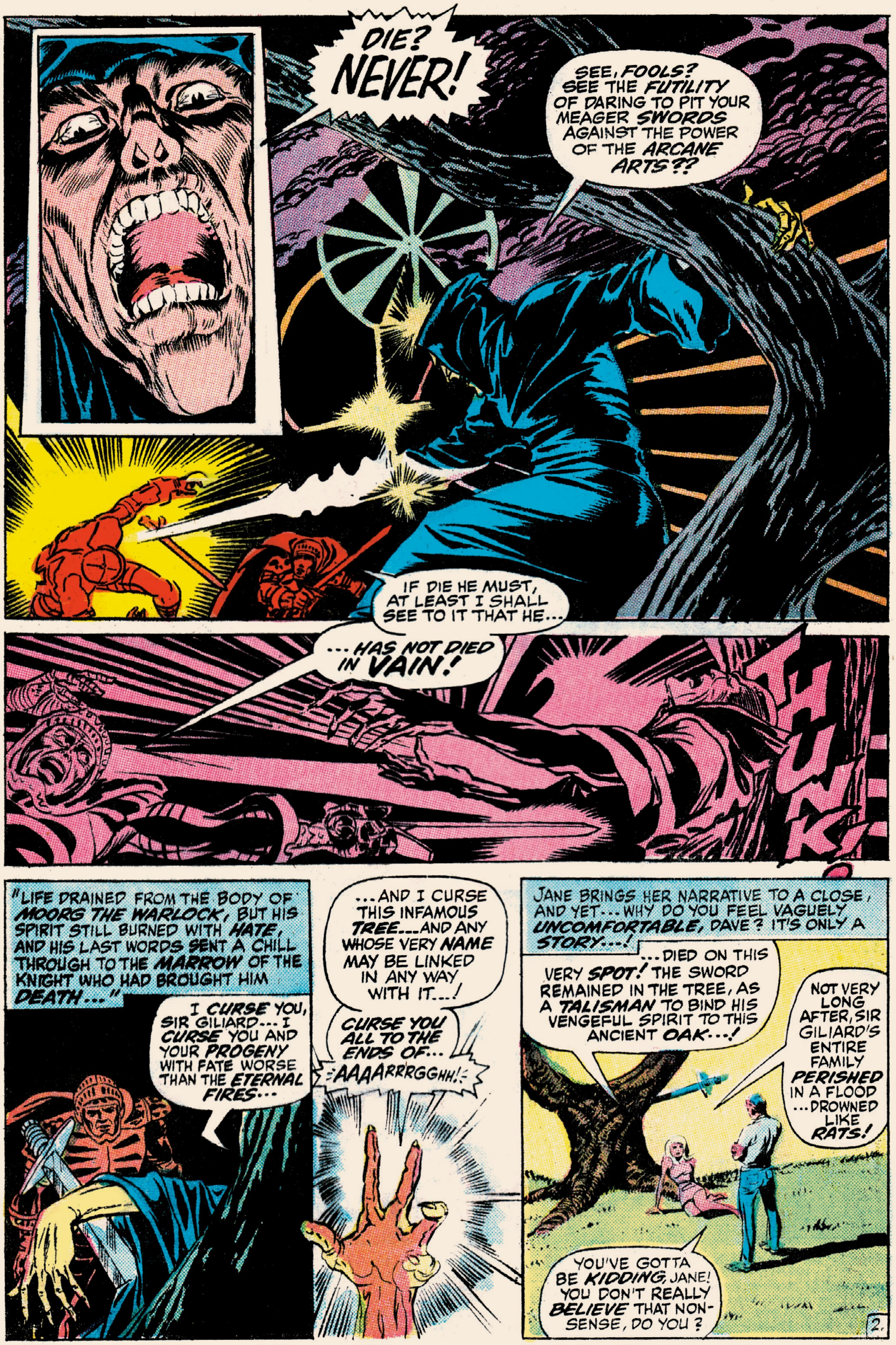

YE'LL FRIGHTEN THIS HANDSOME STRANGER OUT O' THE VILLAGE WITH YER TALK!
STAY OUT O' THIS, GINNY SUTTON!
SORRY, SIR! FORGOT MY PLACE!
HERE NOW! LET THE GIRL SPEAK!
THANKS FOR YOUR COURTESY, FRIEND! I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT PEOPLE OUTSIDE THIS VILLAGE COULD BE LIKE!
IT'S REFRESHING TO MEET A MAN WHO'S NOT AFRAID OF TWO-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD GOSSIP!
YER A HARD GIRL, GINNY SUTTON. JUST BECAUSE YOU WEREN'T BORN HERE, YE THINK Y'CAN JOKE ABOUT THE CURSE AND MOCK OUR WAYS!
COME, COME, HARRIS! YOU MUSTN'T TAKE HER SO SERIOUSLY! SHE'S FAR TOO AMUSING! GIRL, WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK FOR ME WHILE I'M HERE?
WHAT? ME, SIR? WHY, YES, YES! THANK YOU, SIR!
GET YOUR COAT, THEN.
THE OLD FOOL FELL FOR IT! HE SHOULD BE GOOD FOR ENOUGH MONEY TO GET ME OUT OF THIS BLOODY VILLAGE-- AND I DON'T MUCH CARE HOW I GET IT OUT OF HIM!
SOON THEY WERE SPEEDING THROUGH THE DUSK TOWARDS WOLLASTON HOUSE. IT WAS A DARKLING EVE, WITH WIND-WHIPPED BRANCHES FORETELLING A STORM...
YOU ARE A STRANGE GIRL, GINNY SUTTON. ONE MOMENT YOU'RE HARD AND TOUGH, THE NEXT-- HUMBLE AND EAGER.
I'VE SOME GYPSY BLOOD IN MY BACKGROUND, SIR. THE GYPSIES WERE PEOPLE OF QUICKLY CHANGING MOODS!
AND, WHAT THEY WANTED, THEY WERE NOT AFRAID TO TAKE-- AS YOU SHALL LEARN, AND SOON!
FINALLY, THE PAIR REACH THE SKELETAL RUINS OF WOLLASTON HOUSE, SPRAWLED AMID THE LOOMING ANCIENT TREES, HELPLESS BEFORE THE MOANING WIND...
AMAZING! I SENSE A REAL AURA OF MENACE, AN AIR OF EVIL PERMEATING THIS PLACE! WATCH YOUR STEP, MISS SUTTON-- THIS COULD BE DANGEROUS.
5

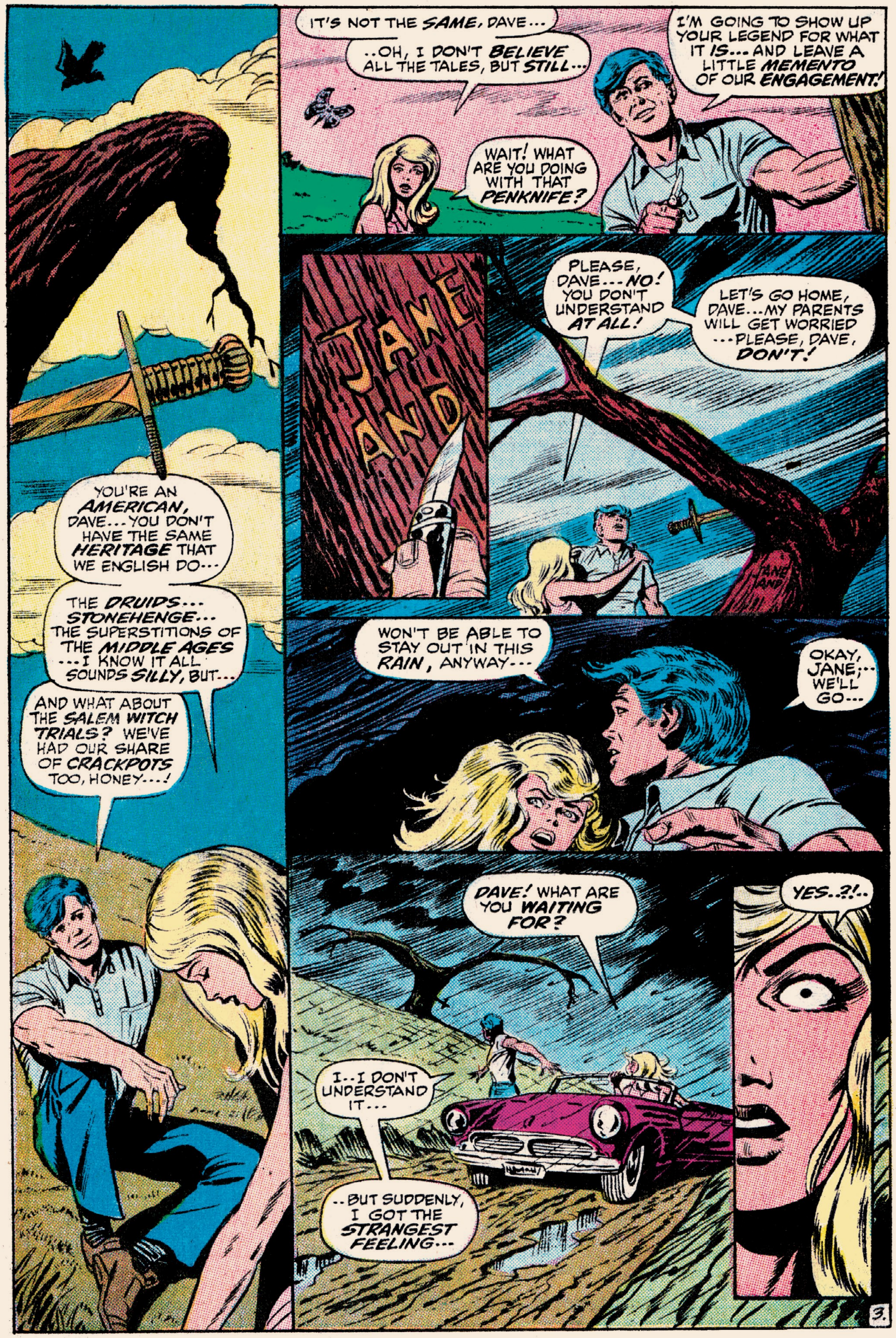

CCREEEEEEEK
MAYBE I COULD GET THE OLD FOOL AHEAD OF ME ON THE STAIRS-- THEN, ONE PUSH...
ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN IN A JUNK-HEAP LIKE THIS!
BUT THIS PLACE IS SCAREY! I SEE STRANGE LIGHTS...AND WEIRD NOISES...
WHAT AM I SO EDGY ABOUT? THIS IS JUST ANOTHER RUN-DOWN RUIN! BUT THERE'S AN AIR ABOUT THIS PLACE THAT I CAN'T SEEM TO SHAKE!
AND... SOMETHING TELLS ME TO... BEWARE OF MISS SUTTON!
SUDDENLY...
EMORY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I KNOW, GIRL-- I KNOW!
THE INSIDE OF THE HOUSE IS... GONE! ALL THERE IS--IS THIS SILVERY GREY MIST... ALL OVER ME... SO HARD TO MOVE...!!
EACH MOVE I MAKE SENDS WAVES OF MIST INTO THE UNSEEN DISTANCE!
NO! DON'T CALL ME THAT! I HAVE NONE OF THEIR CURSED BLOOD!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, GIRL? GET HOLD OF YOURSELF-- THIS PLACE IS SILENT AS A TOMB!
SURELY, I WANTED TO KILL THAT BEARDED BUNGLER FOR HIS MONEY! BUT DON'T CALL ME BY THAT NAME!
I'M NOT A WOLLASTON! I'M A GYPSY!!
A TOMB--YES!! THIS IS A TOMB FOR THE WOLLASTONS, THE FAMILY THAT DIED... AND YET, THEY LIVE!!
OH-- WHAT'S HAPPENING-- I'M CHANGING-- DISSSOooLLLVVIN...
6

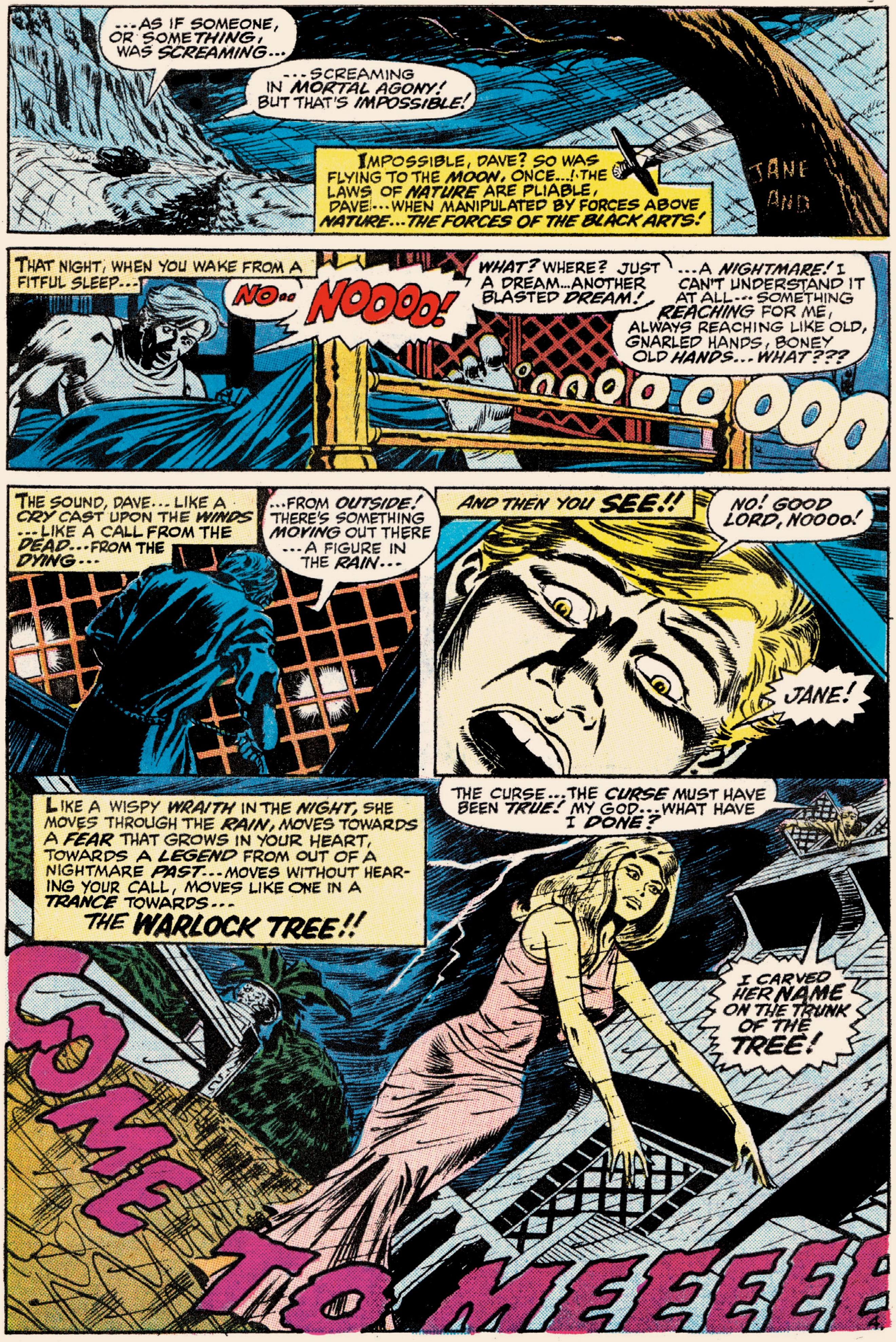

WHAT MERE WORDS CAN DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE THAT BLASTS A LIFE? HOW MAY ONE CAPTURE THE FEELINGS OF A MAN WHO, IN SHOCKED HORROR, WATCHES THE METAMORPHOSIS OF A WOMAN INTO... SOMETHING ELSE!
THE FACE OF GINNY SUTTON IS REFLECTED IN THE SHIMMERING AIR--AND NOT HER FACE ALONE! GHOSTLY THINGS APPEAR... TO WELCOME A NEW MEMBER!

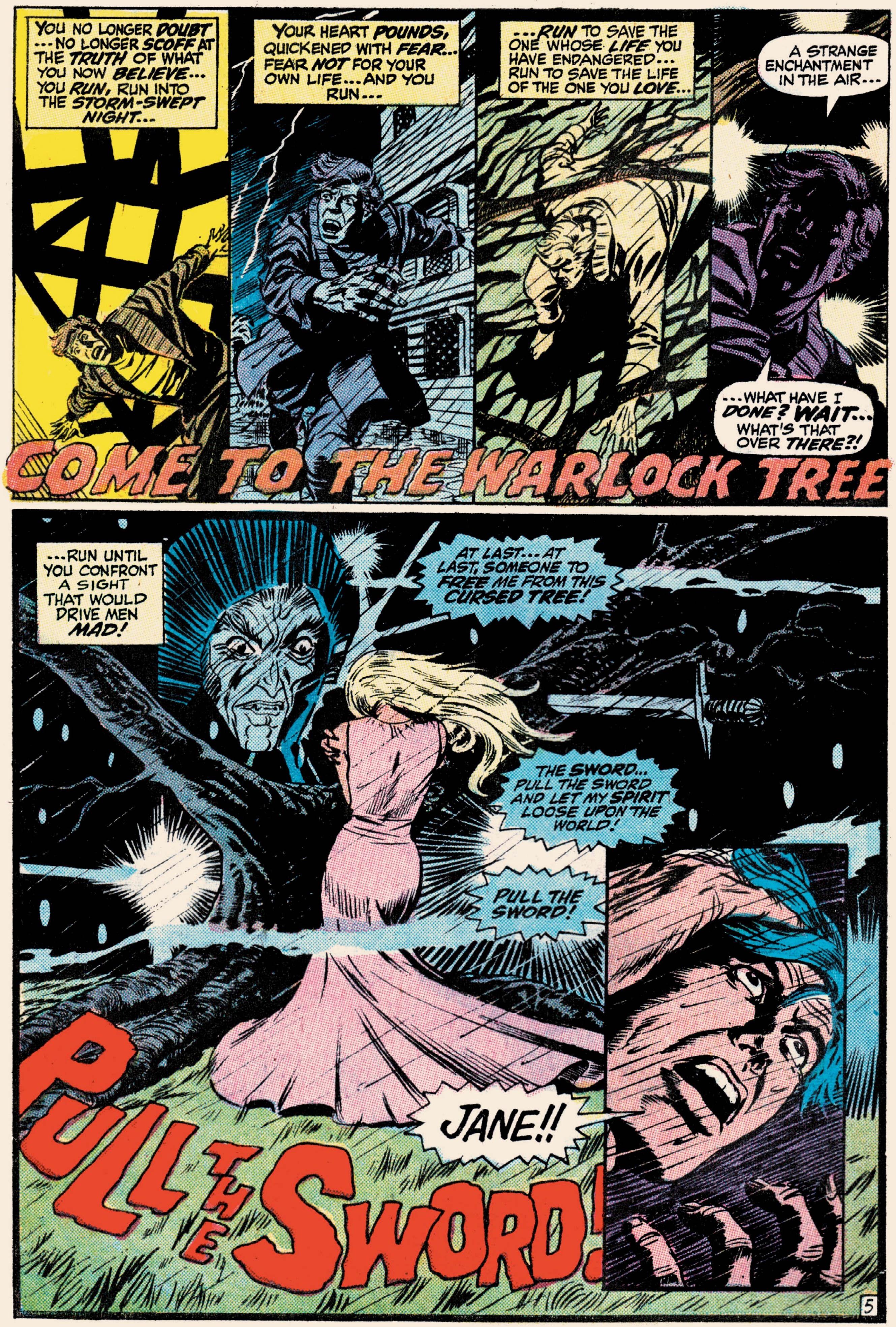

THE VIOLENCE THAT BLACK JOHN WOLLASTON UNLEASHED AGAINST THE GYPSIES, THE VIOLENCE OF THE CURSE, CLAIMS STILL ANOTHER VICTIM!
THE GYPSY CURSE, THREE HUNDRED YEARS OLD, STILL HAS THE POWER TO STRIKE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY!
PROFESSOR EMORY SITS NOW AT A TABLE BEFORE THE BOAR AND HART, PLAYING DOMINOS. HE SAYS VERY LITTLE. BUT, WHENEVER HE GETS A HAUNTED LOOK IN HIS EYES, HE KNOWS THAT HIS THOUGHTS MAY NEVER ESCAPE FROM THAT HELLISH HOUSE, AND THE NEW TENANT WHO WRITHES THROUGH ITS BLASTED WALLS!
LET ALL WHO OFFER VIOLENCE BECOME RUINED SPIRITS, EMBODIED IN THIS RUINED HOUSE! LET YOUR HATE BE TURNED ON THE HOUSE WHICH IS YOUR BODY!!
AND, SOME EVENINGS, TRAVELLERS CAN HEAR, FAINTLY, FROM THE DIRECTION OF WOLLASTON HOUSE, BESTIAL CRIES-- THE SCREAMS OF... THINGS!!
AAAAAAAHHHHHHH
END

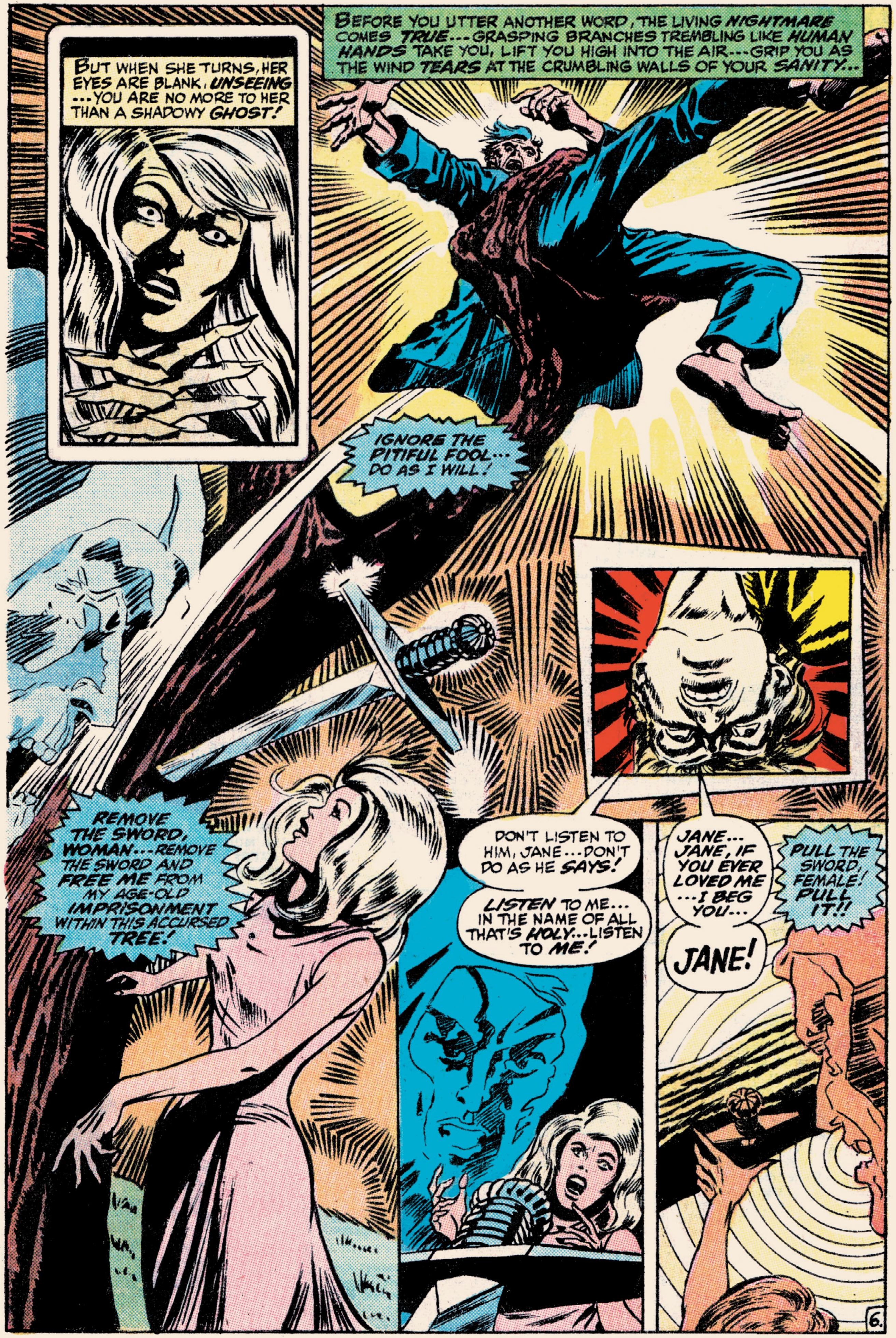

"WIND WHISTLED IN FROM THE MOOR, THAT NIGHT SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO --A COLD, CHILLING WIND THAT PORTENDED THE EVIL WHICH HUNG IN THE AIR LIKE BILLOWING STORM CLOUDS..!"
"...A WICKEDNESS PERSONIFIED IN THE ANCIENT FORM OF MOORG THE WARLOCK..!"
STAND YE BACK!
I'LL NOT HAVE THY VILE PRESENCE THWART MY PLANS ANEW!
'TIS ALREADY TOO LATE FOR PLANNING, WIZARD!
AYE! NOW, YE HAVE TIME ONLY TO DIE!
STAN LEE EDITOR
GERARD CONWAY WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
SYD SHORES INKER
SAM ROSEN LETTERER
THE WARLOCK TREE!

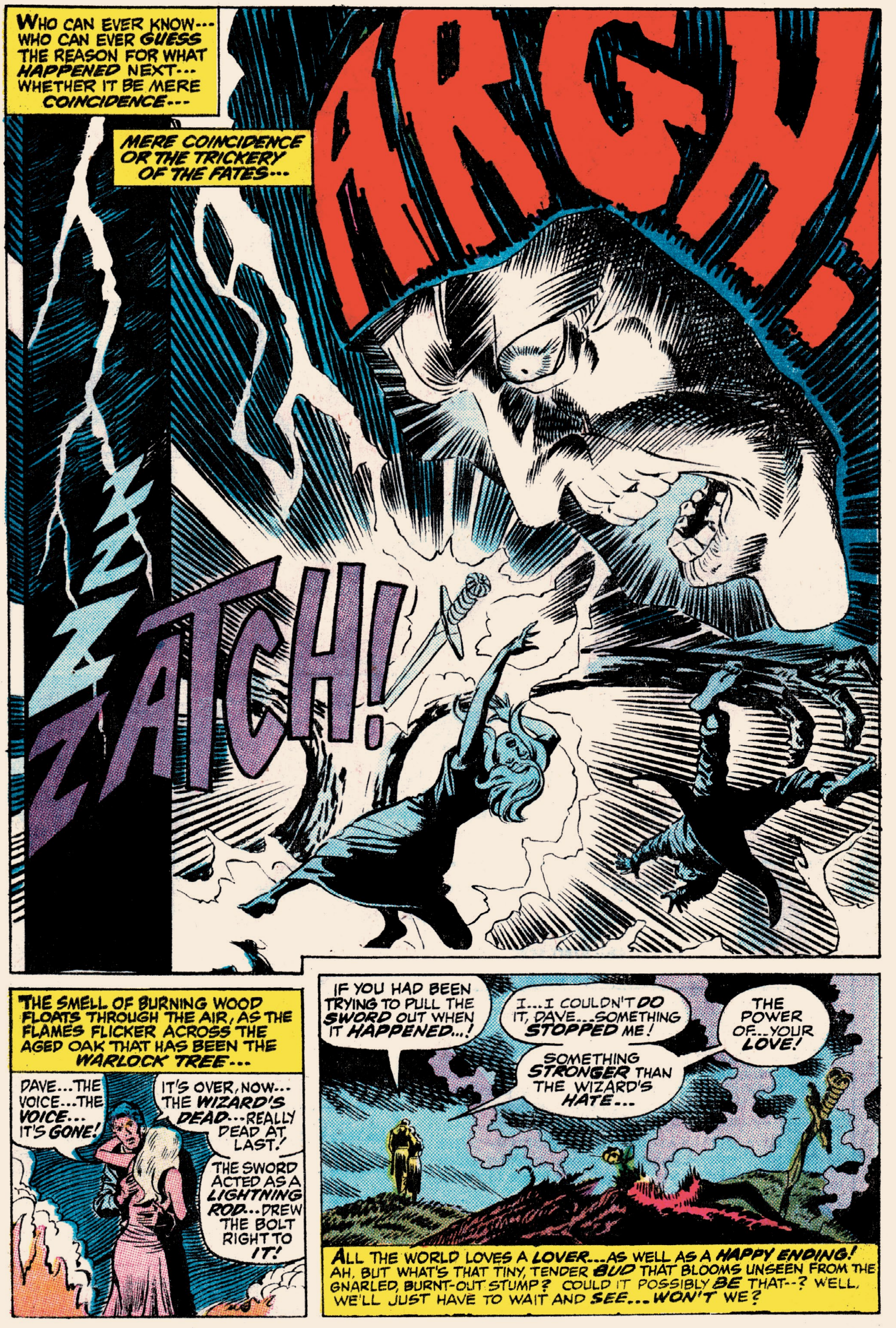

DIE? NEVER!
SEE, FOOLS? SEE THE FUTILITY OF DARING TO PIT YOUR MEAGER SWORDS AGAINST THE POWER OF THE ARCANE ARTS??
IF DIE HE MUST, AT LEAST I SHALL SEE TO IT THAT HE...
...HAS NOT DIED IN VAIN!
THUNK!
"LIFE DRAINED FROM THE BODY OF MOORG THE WARLOCK, BUT HIS SPIRIT STILL BURNED WITH HATE, AND HIS LAST WORDS SENT A CHILL THROUGH TO THE MARROW OF THE KNIGHT WHO HAD BROUGHT HIM DEATH..."
I CURSE YOU, SIR GILIARD... I CURSE YOU AND YOUR PROGENY WITH FATE WORSE THAN THE ETERNAL FIRES...
...AND I CURSE THIS INFAMOUS TREE...AND ANY WHOSE VERY NAME MAY BE LINKED IN ANY WAY WITH IT...!
CURSE YOU ALL TO THE ENDS OF...
AAAARRRGGH!
JANE BRINGS HER NARRATIVE TO A CLOSE, AND YET... WHY DO YOU FEEL VAGUELY UNCOMFORTABLE, DAVE? IT'S ONLY A STORY...!
...DIED ON THIS VERY SPOT! THE SWORD REMAINED IN THE TREE, AS A TALISMAN TO BIND HIS VENGEFUL SPIRIT TO THIS ANCIENT OAK...!
NOT VERY LONG AFTER, SIR GILIARD'S ENTIRE FAMILY PERISHED IN A FLOOD ...DROWNED LIKE RATS!
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING, JANE! YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT NON-SENSE, DO YOU?
2.


YOU'RE AN AMERICAN, DAVE... YOU DON'T HAVE THE SAME HERITAGE THAT WE ENGLISH DO...
THE DRUIDS... STONEHENGE... THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MIDDLE AGES ...I KNOW IT ALL SOUNDS SILLY, BUT...
AND WHAT ABOUT THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS? WE'VE HAD OUR SHARE OF CRACKPOTS TOO, HONEY...!
IT'S NOT THE SAME, DAVE...
..OH, I DON'T BELIEVE ALL THE TALES, BUT STILL...
I'M GOING TO SHOW UP YOUR LEGEND FOR WHAT IT IS... AND LEAVE A LITTLE MEMENTO OF OUR ENGAGEMENT!
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT PENKNIFE?
JANE AND
PLEASE, DAVE... NO! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL!
LET'S GO HOME, DAVE... MY PARENTS WILL GET WORRIED ...PLEASE, DAVE, DON'T!
JANE AND
WON'T BE ABLE TO STAY OUT IN THIS RAIN, ANYWAY...
OKAY, JANE;... WE'LL GO...
DAVE! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
I.. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...
..BUT SUDDENLY, I GOT THE STRANGEST FEELING...
YES..?!..
3.

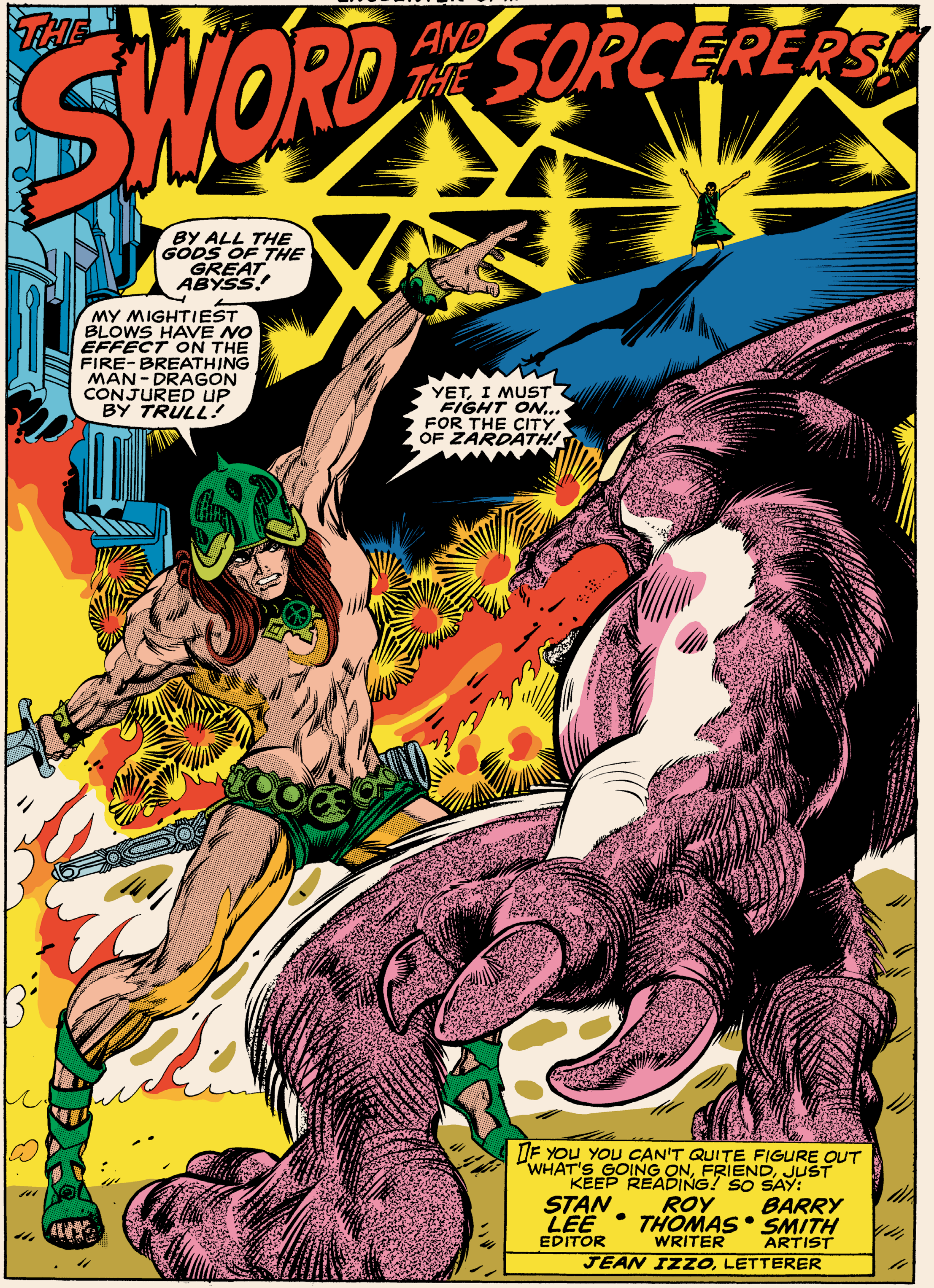

...AS IF SOMEONE, OR SOMETHING, WAS SCREAMING...
...SCREAMING IN MORTAL AGONY! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
IMPOSSIBLE, DAVE? SO WAS FLYING TO THE MOON, ONCE...! THE LAWS OF NATURE ARE PLIABLE, DAVE... WHEN MANIPULATED BY FORCES ABOVE NATURE... THE FORCES OF THE BLACK ARTS!
JANE AND
THAT NIGHT, WHEN YOU WAKE FROM A FITFUL SLEEP...
NO.. NOOOO!
WHAT? WHERE? JUST A DREAM...ANOTHER BLASTED DREAM!
...A NIGHTMARE! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT AT ALL... SOMETHING REACHING FOR ME, ALWAYS REACHING LIKE OLD, GNARLED HANDS, BONEY OLD HANDS... WHAT???
OOOOOOOOO
THE SOUND, DAVE... LIKE A CRY CAST UPON THE WINDS ...LIKE A CALL FROM THE DEAD... FROM THE DYING...
...FROM OUTSIDE! THERE'S SOMETHING MOVING OUT THERE ...A FIGURE IN THE RAIN...
AND THEN YOU SEE!!
NO! GOOD LORD, NOOOO!
JANE!
LIKE A WISPY WRAITH IN THE NIGHT, SHE MOVES THROUGH THE RAIN, MOVES TOWARDS A FEAR THAT GROWS IN YOUR HEART, TOWARDS A LEGEND FROM OUT OF A NIGHTMARE PAST... MOVES WITHOUT HEARING YOUR CALL, MOVES LIKE ONE IN A TRANCE TOWARDS... THE WARLOCK TREE!!
THE CURSE... THE CURSE MUST HAVE BEEN TRUE! MY GOD... WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I CARVED HER NAME ON THE TRUNK OF THE TREE!
OME TO MEEEEE
4

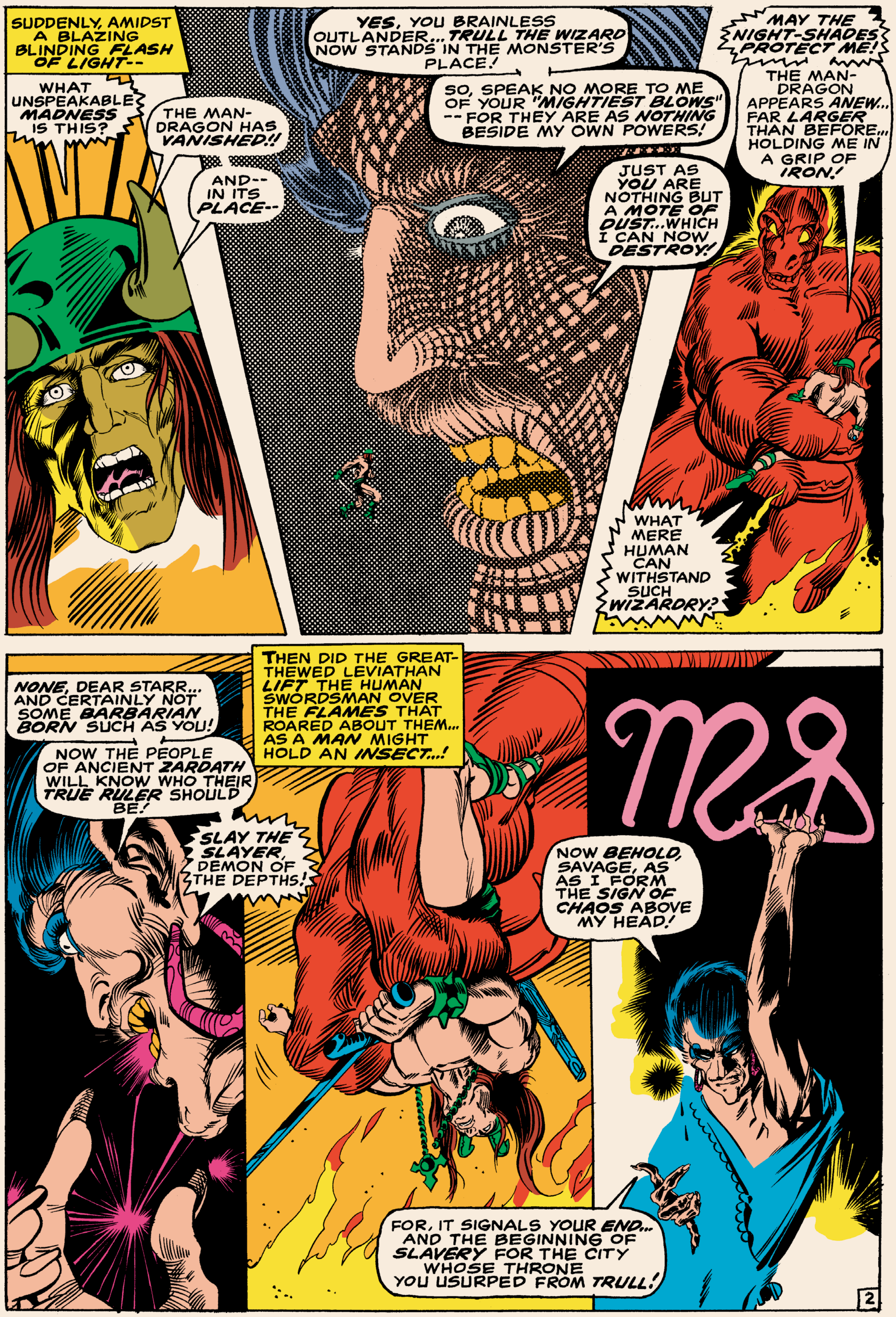

YOU NO LONGER DOUBT ...NO LONGER SCOFF AT THE TRUTH OF WHAT YOU NOW BELIEVE... YOU RUN, RUN INTO THE STORM-SWEPT NIGHT...
YOUR HEART POUNDS, QUICKENED WITH FEAR... FEAR NOT FOR YOUR OWN LIFE...AND YOU RUN...
...RUN TO SAVE THE ONE WHOSE LIFE YOU HAVE ENDANGERED... RUN TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE ONE YOU LOVE...
A STRANGE ENCHANTMENT IN THE AIR...
...WHAT HAVE I DONE? WAIT... WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE?!
COME TO THE WARLOCK TREE
...RUN UNTIL YOU CONFRONT A SIGHT THAT WOULD DRIVE MEN MAD!
AT LAST... AT LAST, SOMEONE TO FREE ME FROM THIS CURSED TREE!
THE SWORD... PULL THE SWORD AND LET MY SPIRIT LOOSE UPON THE WORLD!
PULL THE SWORD!
JANE!!
PULL THE SWORD!
5

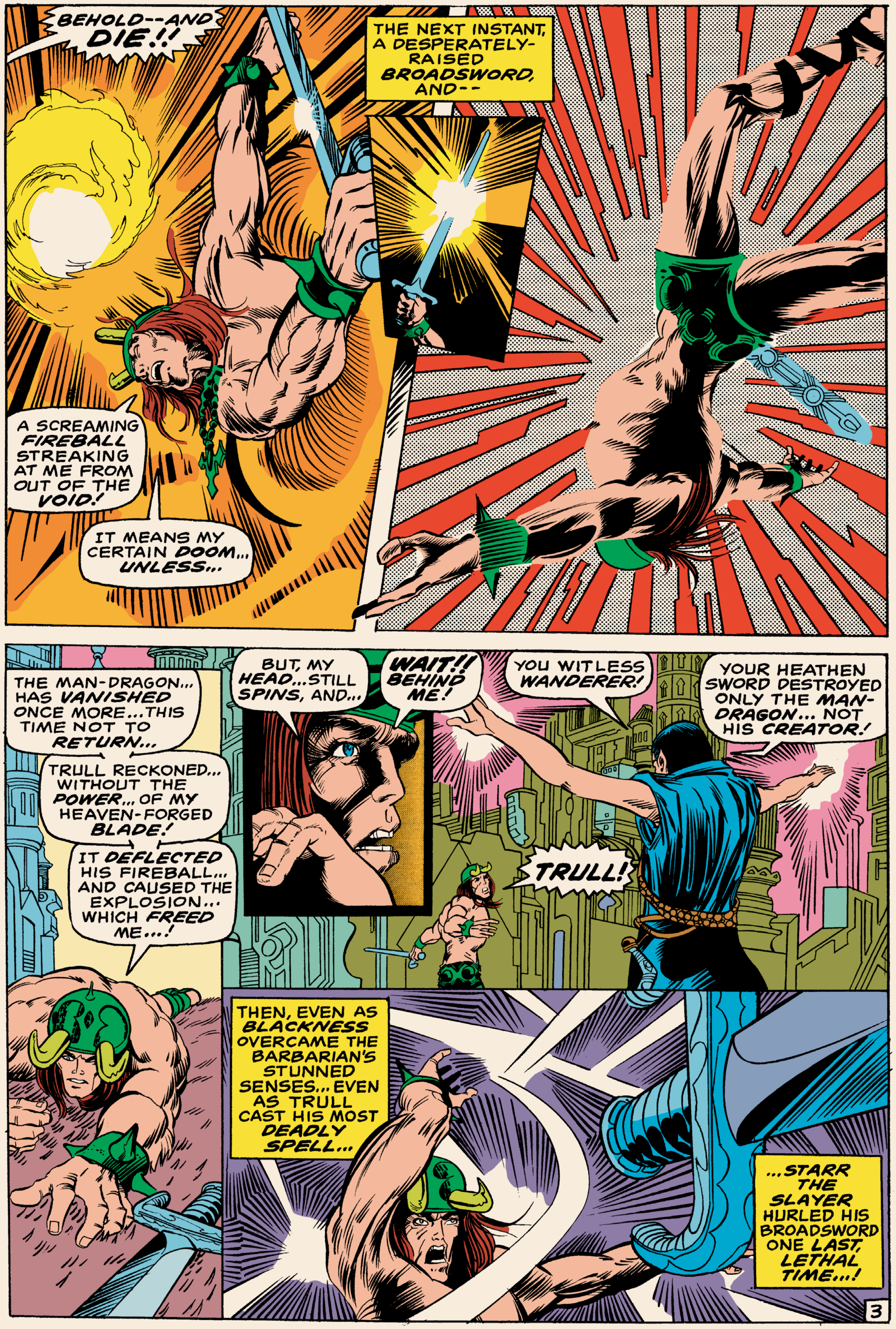

BUT WHEN SHE TURNS, HER EYES ARE BLANK, UNSEEING ... YOU ARE NO MORE TO HER THAN A SHADOWY GHOST!
BEFORE YOU UTTER ANOTHER WORD, THE LIVING NIGHTMARE COMES TRUE--- GRASPING BRANCHES TREMBLING LIKE HUMAN HANDS TAKE YOU, LIFT YOU HIGH INTO THE AIR--- GRIP YOU AS THE WIND TEARS AT THE CRUMBLING WALLS OF YOUR SANITY...
IGNORE THE PITIFUL FOOL... DO AS I WILL!
REMOVE THE SWORD, WOMAN... REMOVE THE SWORD AND FREE ME FROM MY AGE-OLD IMPRISONMENT WITHIN THIS ACCURSED TREE!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, JANE... DON'T DO AS HE SAYS!
LISTEN TO ME... IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S HOLY... LISTEN TO ME!
JANE... JANE, IF YOU EVER LOVED ME ...I BEG YOU...
JANE!
PULL THE SWORD, FEMALE! PULL IT!!
6.

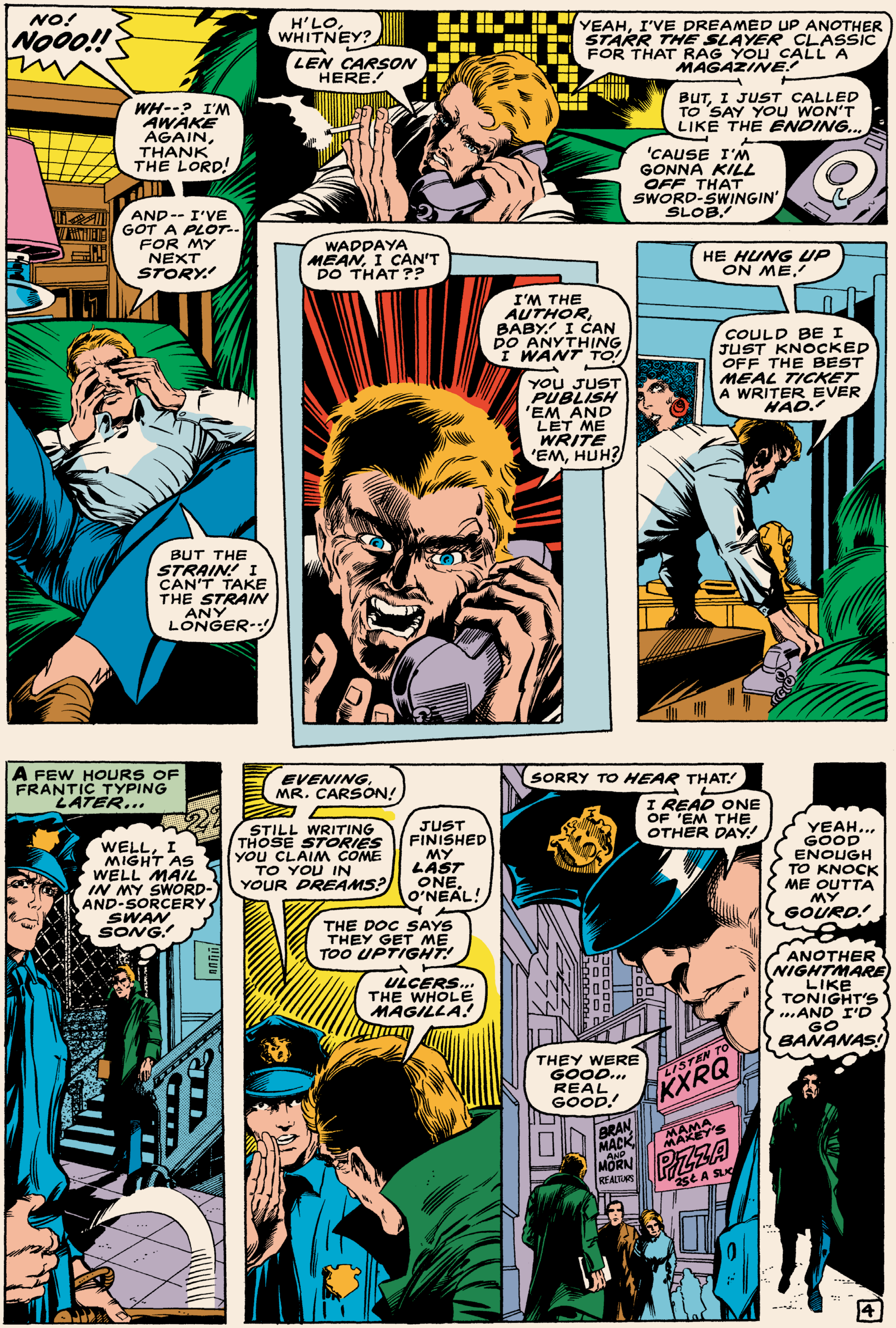

WHO CAN EVER KNOW--- WHO CAN EVER *GUESS* THE REASON FOR WHAT *HAPPENED* NEXT--- WHETHER IT BE MERE *COINCIDENCE*---
MERE COINCIDENCE OR THE TRICKERY OF THE FATES---
ARGH!
ZZZZATCH!
THE SMELL OF BURNING WOOD FLOATS THROUGH THE AIR, AS THE FLAMES FLICKER ACROSS THE AGED OAK THAT HAS BEEN THE *WARLOCK TREE*---
DAVE...THE VOICE...THE *VOICE*... IT'S *GONE*!
IT'S OVER, NOW... THE *WIZARD'S DEAD*...REALLY DEAD AT LAST!
THE SWORD ACTED AS A *LIGHTNING ROD*...DREW THE BOLT RIGHT TO *IT*!
IF YOU HAD BEEN TRYING TO PULL THE *SWORD* OUT WHEN IT *HAPPENED*...!
I...I COULDN'T *DO* IT, DAVE...SOMETHING *STOPPED* ME!
SOMETHING *STRONGER* THAN THE WIZARD'S *HATE*...
THE POWER OF...YOUR *LOVE*!
ALL THE WORLD LOVES A *LOVER*...AS WELL AS A *HAPPY ENDING*! AH, BUT WHAT'S THAT TINY, TENDER *BUD* THAT BLOOMS UNSEEN FROM THE GNARLED, BURNT-OUT STUMP? COULD IT POSSIBLY *BE* THAT--? WELL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND *SEE*...*WON'T* WE?

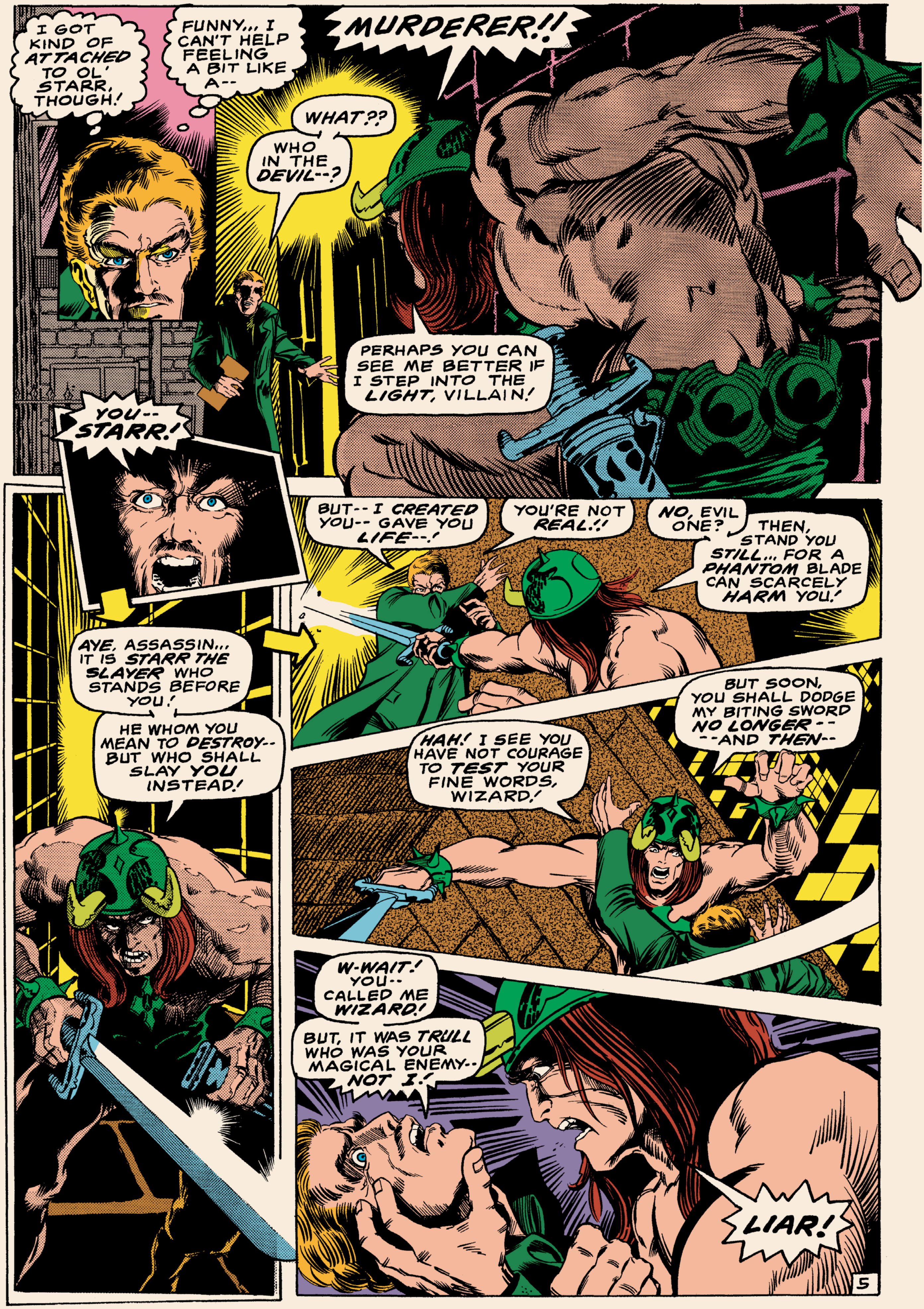
THE SUN TURNED *CRIMSON* AS THE HARD-FOUGHT BATTLE RAGED... AS ***STARR THE SLAYER*** STRUCK BLOW AFTER BLOW TO SAVE THE CITY HE RULED FROM THE SCARLET ***BEHEMOTH*** WHICH MENACED IT! AND ON THE PURPLE PLAIN ABOVE MANY-TOWERED ZARDATH, THE EVIL WIZARD ***TRULL*** RECITED HIS MOST POTENT SPELLS... FOR, THIS DAY WOULD MARK THE ***FINAL ENCOUNTER*** OF...

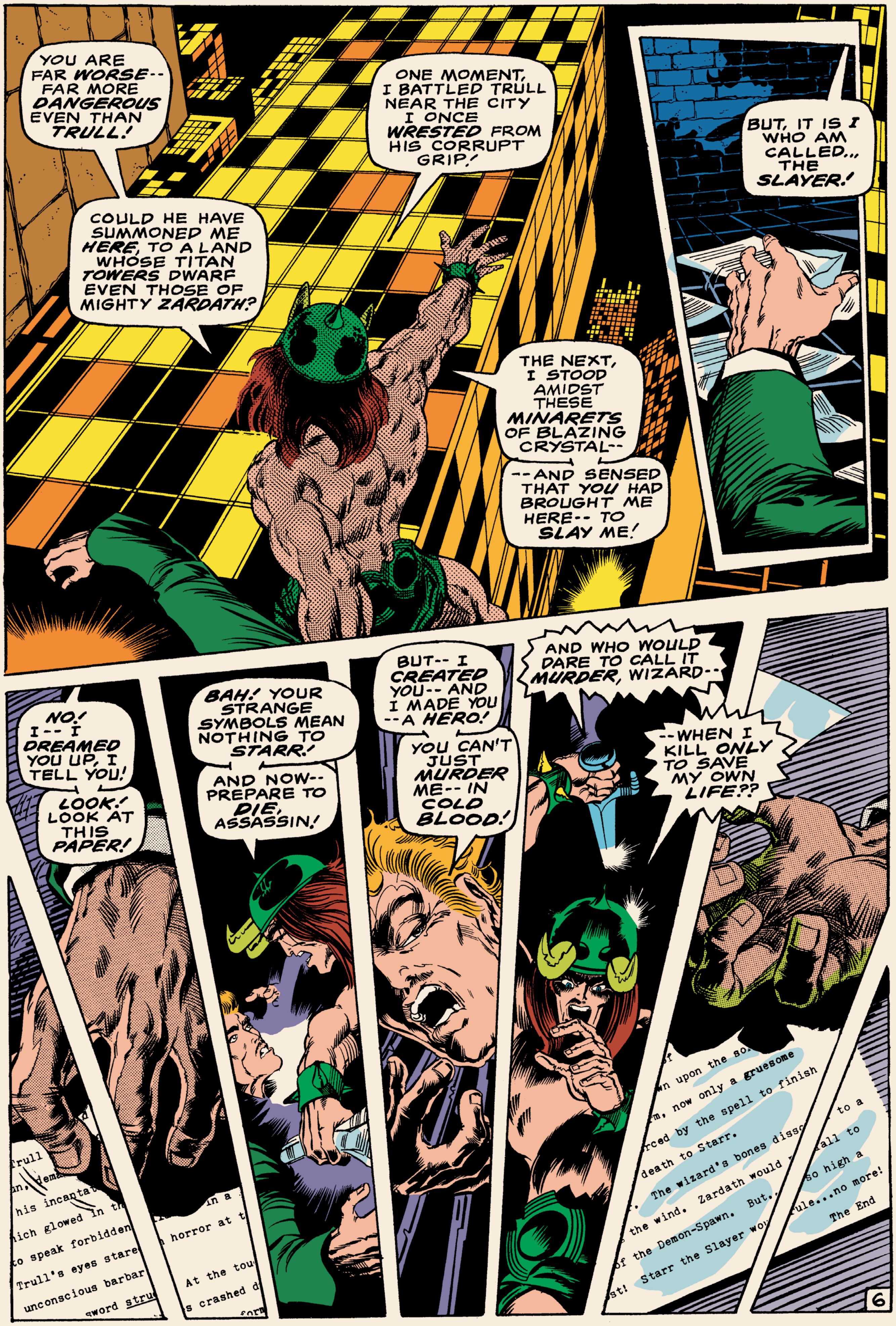

THE SWORD AND THE SORCERERS!
BY ALL THE GODS OF THE GREAT ABYSS!
MY MIGHTIEST BLOWS HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE FIRE-BREATHING MAN-DRAGON CONJURED UP BY TRULL!
YET, I MUST FIGHT ON... FOR THE CITY OF ZARDATH!
IF YOU YOU CAN'T QUITE FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON, FRIEND, JUST KEEP READING! SO SAY:
STAN LEE EDITOR • ROY THOMAS WRITER • BARRY SMITH ARTIST
JEAN IZZO, LETTERER

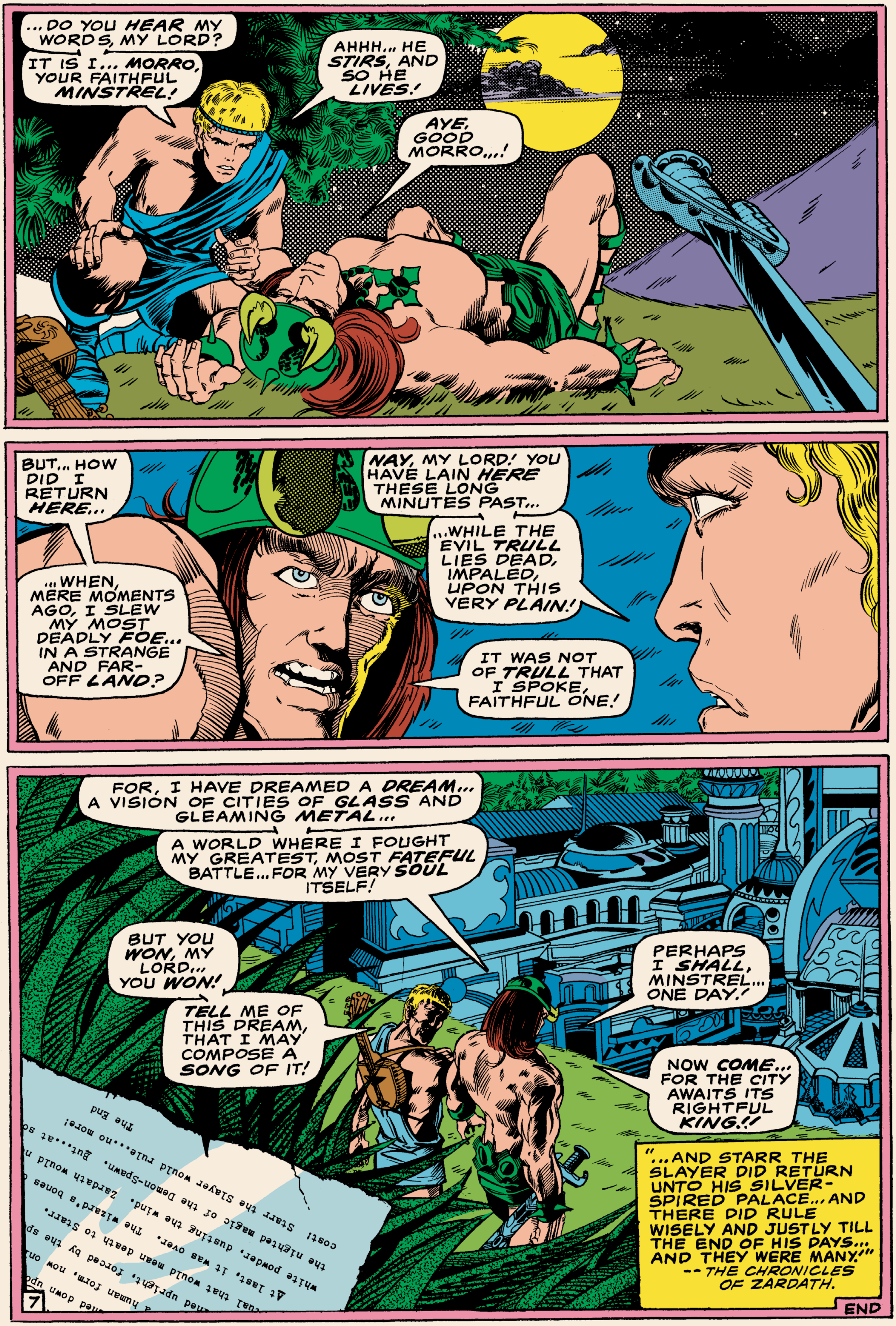

SUDDENLY, AMIDST A BLAZING BLINDING *FLASH OF LIGHT*--
WHAT UNSPEAKABLE *MADNESS* IS THIS?
THE MAN-DRAGON HAS *VANISHED!!*
AND--IN ITS *PLACE*--
YES, YOU BRAINLESS OUTLANDER... *TRULL THE WIZARD* NOW STANDS IN THE MONSTER'S PLACE!
SO, SPEAK NO MORE TO ME OF YOUR *"MIGHTIEST BLOWS"* --FOR THEY ARE AS *NOTHING* BESIDE MY OWN POWERS!
JUST AS *YOU* ARE NOTHING BUT A *MOTE OF DUST*... WHICH I CAN NOW *DESTROY!*
MAY THE NIGHT-SHADES PROTECT ME!
THE MAN-DRAGON APPEARS *ANEW*... FAR *LARGER* THAN BEFORE... HOLDING ME IN A GRIP OF *IRON!*
WHAT MERE HUMAN CAN WITHSTAND SUCH *WIZARDRY?*
NONE, DEAR STARR... AND CERTAINLY NOT SOME *BARBARIAN BORN* SUCH AS YOU!
NOW THE PEOPLE OF ANCIENT *ZARDATH* WILL KNOW WHO THEIR *TRUE RULER* SHOULD BE!
SLAY THE SLAYER, DEMON OF THE DEPTHS!
THEN DID THE GREAT-THEWED LEVIATHAN *LIFT* THE HUMAN SWORDSMAN OVER THE *FLAMES* THAT ROARED ABOUT THEM... AS A *MAN* MIGHT HOLD AN *INSECT...!*
NOW *BEHOLD*, SAVAGE, AS AS I FORM THE *SIGN OF CHAOS* ABOVE MY HEAD!
FOR, IT SIGNALS YOUR *END*... AND THE BEGINNING OF *SLAVERY* FOR THE CITY WHOSE THRONE YOU USURPED FROM *TRULL!*
2


BEHOLD--AND DIE!!
THE NEXT INSTANT, A DESPERATELY-RAISED BROADSWORD, AND--
A SCREAMING FIREBALL STREAKING AT ME FROM OUT OF THE VOID!
IT MEANS MY CERTAIN DOOM... UNLESS...
THE MAN-DRAGON... HAS VANISHED ONCE MORE... THIS TIME NOT TO RETURN...
TRULL RECKONED... WITHOUT THE POWER... OF MY HEAVEN-FORGED BLADE!
IT DEFLECTED HIS FIREBALL... AND CAUSED THE EXPLOSION... WHICH FREED ME...!
BUT, MY HEAD... STILL SPINS, AND...
WAIT!! BEHIND ME!
YOU WITLESS WANDERER!
YOUR HEATHEN SWORD DESTROYED ONLY THE MAN-DRAGON... NOT HIS CREATOR!
TRULL!
THEN, EVEN AS BLACKNESS OVERCAME THE BARBARIAN'S STUNNED SENSES... EVEN AS TRULL CAST HIS MOST DEADLY SPELL...
...STARR THE SLAYER HURLED HIS BROADSWORD ONE LAST, LETHAL TIME...!
3


NO! NOOO!!
WH--? I'M AWAKE AGAIN, THANK THE LORD!
AND-- I'VE GOT A PLOT-- FOR MY NEXT STORY!
BUT THE STRAIN! I CAN'T TAKE THE STRAIN ANY LONGER--!
H'LO, WHITNEY?
LEN CARSON HERE!
YEAH, I'VE DREAMED UP ANOTHER STARR THE SLAYER CLASSIC FOR THAT RAG YOU CALL A MAGAZINE!
BUT, I JUST CALLED TO SAY YOU WON'T LIKE THE ENDING...
'CAUSE I'M GONNA KILL OFF THAT SWORD-SWINGIN' SLOB!
WADDAYA MEAN, I CAN'T DO THAT??
I'M THE AUTHOR, BABY! I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT TO!
YOU JUST PUBLISH 'EM AND LET ME WRITE 'EM, HUH?
HE HUNG UP ON ME!
COULD BE I JUST KNOCKED OFF THE BEST MEAL TICKET A WRITER EVER HAD!
A FEW HOURS OF FRANTIC TYPING LATER...
WELL, I MIGHT AS WELL MAIL IN MY SWORD-AND-SORCERY SWAN SONG!
EVENING, MR. CARSON!
STILL WRITING THOSE STORIES YOU CLAIM COME TO YOU IN YOUR DREAMS?
JUST FINISHED MY LAST ONE, O'NEAL!
THE DOC SAYS THEY GET ME TOO UPTIGHT!
ULCERS... THE WHOLE MAGILLA!
SORRY TO HEAR THAT!
I READ ONE OF 'EM THE OTHER DAY!
THEY WERE GOOD... REAL GOOD!
LISTEN TO KXRQ
BRAN, MACK, AND MORN REALTORS
MAMA MAXEY'S PIZZA 25¢ A SLICE
YEAH... GOOD ENOUGH TO KNOCK ME OUTTA MY GOURD!
ANOTHER NIGHTMARE LIKE TONIGHT'S ...AND I'D GO BANANAS!
4


I GOT KIND OF *ATTACHED* TO OL' STARR, THOUGH!
FUNNY... I CAN'T HELP FEELING A BIT LIKE A--
MURDERER!!
WHAT??
WHO IN THE *DEVIL--?*
PERHAPS YOU CAN SEE ME BETTER IF I STEP INTO THE *LIGHT,* VILLAIN!
YOU-- STARR!
AYE, ASSASSIN... IT IS *STARR THE SLAYER* WHO STANDS BEFORE YOU!
HE WHOM YOU MEAN TO *DESTROY--* BUT WHO SHALL SLAY *YOU* INSTEAD!
BUT-- I *CREATED* YOU-- GAVE YOU *LIFE--!*
YOU'RE NOT *REAL!!*
NO, EVIL ONE?
THEN, STAND YOU *STILL...* FOR A *PHANTOM* BLADE CAN SCARCELY *HARM* YOU!
BUT SOON, YOU SHALL DODGE MY BITING SWORD *NO LONGER--*
--AND *THEN--*
HAH! I SEE YOU HAVE NOT COURAGE TO *TEST* YOUR FINE WORDS, WIZARD!
W-WAIT! YOU-- CALLED ME *WIZARD!*
BUT, IT WAS *TRULL* WHO WAS YOUR MAGICAL ENEMY-- *NOT I!*
LIAR!
5


YOU ARE FAR WORSE-- FAR MORE DANGEROUS EVEN THAN TRULL!
COULD HE HAVE SUMMONED ME HERE, TO A LAND WHOSE TITAN TOWERS DWARF EVEN THOSE OF MIGHTY ZARDATH?
ONE MOMENT, I BATTLED TRULL NEAR THE CITY I ONCE WRESTED FROM HIS CORRUPT GRIP!
THE NEXT, I STOOD AMIDST THESE MINARETS OF BLAZING CRYSTAL--
--AND SENSED THAT YOU HAD BROUGHT ME HERE-- TO SLAY ME!
BUT, IT IS I WHO AM CALLED... THE SLAYER!
NO! I-- I DREAMED YOU UP, I TELL YOU!
LOOK! LOOK AT THIS PAPER!
Trull
n, dema
his incantat
hich glowed in th
to speak forbidden
Trull's eyes stare
unconscious barbar
sword stru
BAH! YOUR STRANGE SYMBOLS MEAN NOTHING TO STARR!
AND NOW-- PREPARE TO DIE, ASSASSIN!
in a
horror at t
At the tou
s crashed d
form
BUT-- I CREATED YOU-- AND I MADE YOU --A HERO!
YOU CAN'T JUST MURDER ME-- IN COLD BLOOD!
AND WHO WOULD DARE TO CALL IT MURDER, WIZARD--
--WHEN I KILL ONLY TO SAVE MY OWN LIFE??
f
wn upon the so
m, now only a gruesome
rced by the spell to finish
death to Starr.
. The wizard's bones disso
the wind. Zardath would
of the Demon-Spawn. But..
st! Starr the Slayer wo
to a
all to
so high a
rule...no more!
The End
6


...DO YOU HEAR MY WORDS, MY LORD?
IT IS I... MORRO, YOUR FAITHFUL MINSTREL!
AHHH... HE STIRS, AND SO HE LIVES!
AYE, GOOD MORRO...!
BUT... HOW DID I RETURN HERE...
...WHEN, MERE MOMENTS AGO, I SLEW MY MOST DEADLY FOE... IN A STRANGE AND FAR-OFF LAND?
NAY, MY LORD! YOU HAVE LAIN HERE THESE LONG MINUTES PAST...
...WHILE THE EVIL TRULL LIES DEAD, IMPALED, UPON THIS VERY PLAIN!
IT WAS NOT OF TRULL THAT I SPOKE, FAITHFUL ONE!
FOR, I HAVE DREAMED A DREAM... A VISION OF CITIES OF GLASS AND GLEAMING METAL...
A WORLD WHERE I FOUGHT MY GREATEST, MOST FATEFUL BATTLE... FOR MY VERY SOUL ITSELF!
BUT YOU WON, MY LORD... YOU WON!
TELL ME OF THIS DREAM, THAT I MAY COMPOSE A SONG OF IT!
PERHAPS I SHALL, MINSTREL... ONE DAY!
NOW COME... FOR THE CITY AWAITS ITS RIGHTFUL KING!!
"...AND STARR THE SLAYER DID RETURN UNTO HIS SILVER-SPIRED PALACE... AND THERE DID RULE WISELY AND JUSTLY TILL THE END OF HIS DAYS... AND THEY WERE MANY!" --THE CHRONICLES OF ZARDATH.
7
END

ASTONISHING MAILS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 625 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Dear Sirs:

The excellence of ASTONISHING TALES #3 prompts me to write this letter. With Ka-Zar's return to the Savage Land, the story shows promise of becoming a Sword & Sorcery yarn—one to hold my interest from installment to installment.

So far the DOCTOR DOOM strip has held more interest for me—simply because of Wallace Wood's art. No one rivals him in his realistic drawing of people.

But as for the story, if too many cooks spoil the broth, then so do too many ingredients. The rule in DOCTOR DOOM was: mix one Dr. Doom, one Faceless One, one android, and stir well. It would have been a good story spread over many installments, but this was not the case. And how could you get rid of the Faceless One with one sentence (page 10, panel 5)? But I have hopes for his immediate return.

The above did not detract much from my enjoyment of ASTONISHING TALES. I am glad my recent return to comic reading allowed me to be on hand for the birth of ASTONISHING TALES and CONAN.

Ron Andrukitis, Box 1344
Homestead, Fla. 33030

And we're glad you're back!

Stick with us for more fun an' games, pals. You, too, Ron. Guess you can come along for the ride.

Dear Stan, Barry, Gerry, Wally, and Larry,

I just read "Back to the Savage Land", and Barry's art was great. I hope Ka-Zar returns to New York again (which I seriously doubt) and teams up with other Marvel greats. From the letters page, I can see that not too many fans know about the powers of Ka-Zar and Zabu.

As for Doctor Doom, he's a villain for a reason. Even I'd thirst for revenge if someone's "interference" with an experiment of mine turned my face into a mass of scars. Not even Doctor Doom can bear to look at his own face. So you see—even Doc Doom's not so bad after all!

James Dixon, 1368 Bayard
St. Louis, Mo. 63113

Hmmm—not so bad after all, eh, Jim?

Seems there's some clearing up to be done. As you bibliophiles'll recall, way back in FF #5, when ole scarface was introduced by Stan and Jack, Reed Richards was trying to stop Victor von Doom from going ahead with the experiment you mentioned . . . but Doom, because of his pride, refused to accept Reed's advice—and the experiment went Blooey!

Doom's resulting hate of Reed Richards comes from stung pride—he's mad, not at Reed so much as at himself, for not listening to the young Mr. Richard's warning; he can't admit to himself that it was all his fault, though; so what results is one heck of a bitter and anguished and hating super-villain.

And if you can understand that, gang, tell us what we said!

Dear Stan, Roy, Wally, Barry, etc.,

Grok this:

You guys really have some great stuff going now. KA-ZAR, DOCTOR DOOM, CONAN, HULK, and several others are really top-notch science-fantasy.

As it has been from the start, your best stuff is the kind of story with a very personal theme, rather than a twenty-page free-for-all.

The Doctor Doom series is developing very well, and it is really a favorite of mine. You reach some very nice parables showing the relativity of good and evil. Larry Lieber turned in one of the best scripts ever for ASTONISHING TALES #3, and words can't even describe the quality of Wally Wood's artwork.

Of course, one thing that is bothersome is the fact that Jack Kirby's artwork no longer graces the pages of Marvel. Fortunately, you've got some fine artists to pick up the slack. Barry Smith, Herb Trimpe, and several others are really doing some fine stuff. And of course, there's Wally Wood . . .

You've come a long way in these last ten years, and a large segment of this generation was right there with you. Congratu- for the continuity, scope, and acute sensitivity that has made Marvel a household word. WOW!

Mike Scorzelli, 1518 Gillespie Ave.
Bronx, NY 10461

And thanks for the kind words, Mike. We've always tried to live up to the high standards set back in those early days—and, with readers like you to back us up . . . heck, guys, we can't fail!

Dear Stan, Roy, and Wally,

It's great to see Wally again, and he's doing an A-1 job. But to leave that aside, get your No-Prize ready—for I know the location of Ka-Zar's hidden jungle.

To begin with, it is common knowledge that the continents are slowly moving apart (or together, depending on how you look at it). Between the eastern coast of the United States and the western coast of Europe, a land mass is rising out of the Atlantic Ocean. This land mass extends from Greenland to Antarctica. Slightly west of this is Atlantis. The land mass I speak of is the "hidden jungle".

The first access to the "hidden jungle" was seen in Ka-Zar's first appearance in X-MEN in 1965. Although this was closed up, the Hulk made the hole appear again in issue #109 of his own mag. In ASTONISHING #1, Kraven enters and exits through the Greenland entrance, while Ka-Zar exits the jungle by way of an underground river. The Plunderer in MSH enters through the Greenland entrance . . . I could go on and on.

Some say the Hidden Jungle was created by the Watcher to observe the reconstruction of primitive life. Others say Mephisto built it for evil purposes, but later abandoned it. Who knows?

Paul Karasik, 9 West Lenox Street
Chevy Chase, Md. 20015

Paul, we've gotta hand it to you—that's one fluringshinger explanation you've got there. Of course, whether it's true or not is another matter . . . one we hope to resolve in an upcoming issue of this mag. Bear with us, fellas—honest, it only seems like we don't know what we're doing!

Dear Stan, Roy, Wally, Larry, Gerry, and Barry,

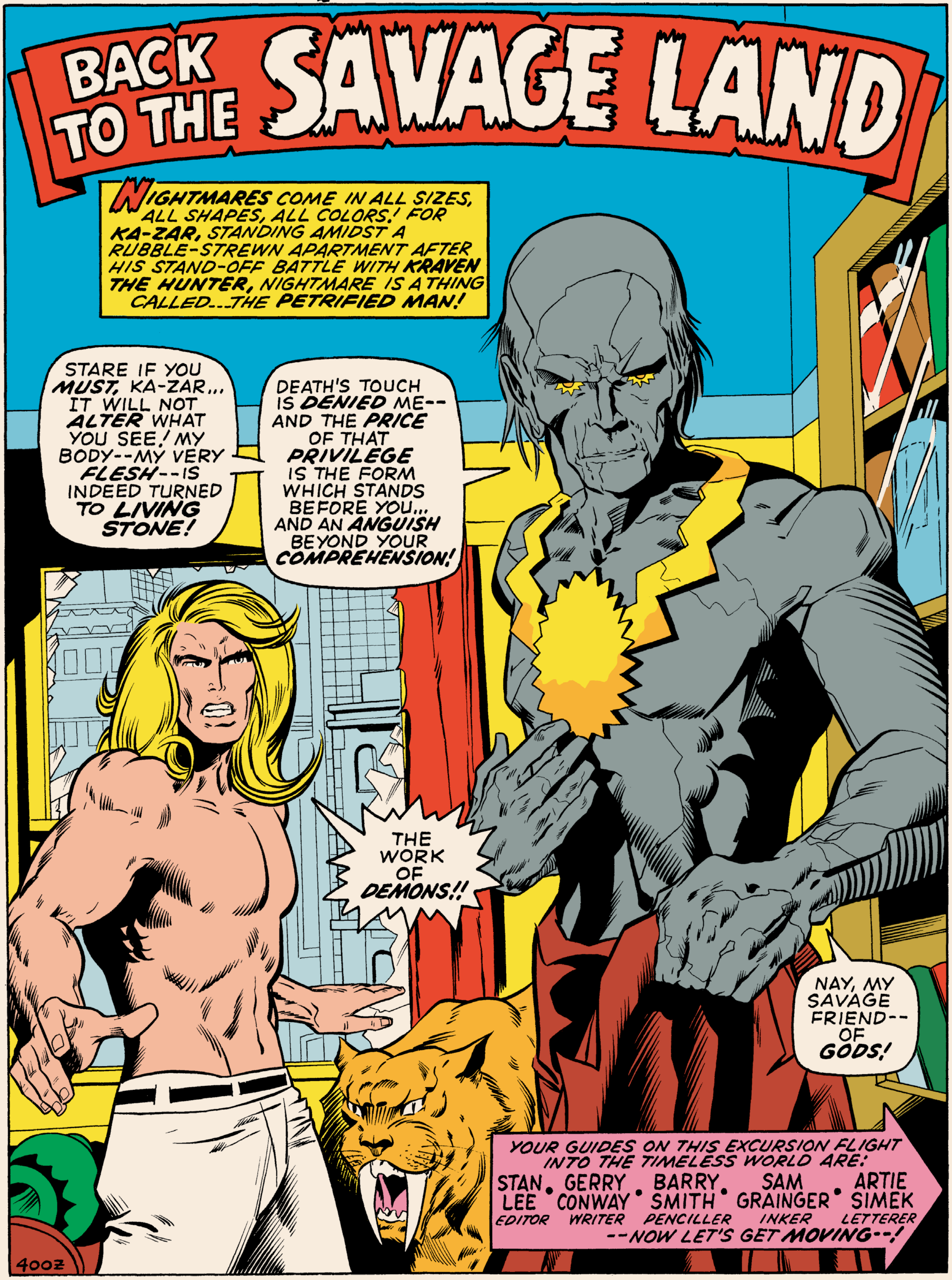
Great! After three issues, ASTONISHING TALES has really improved. Jack Kirby just never had the feeling of Ka-Zar. However, now that Barry Smith has taken over, the strip has really made it worth the ink it's printed with! A few points on the story though—Ka-Zar seems to act too much like Tarzan and talks more like Thor than a man of simple surroundings. It might be better to concentrate on Ka-Zar's kingdom and his people's enemies. There's really nothing much I can suggest to improve your magazine—you've come a long way!

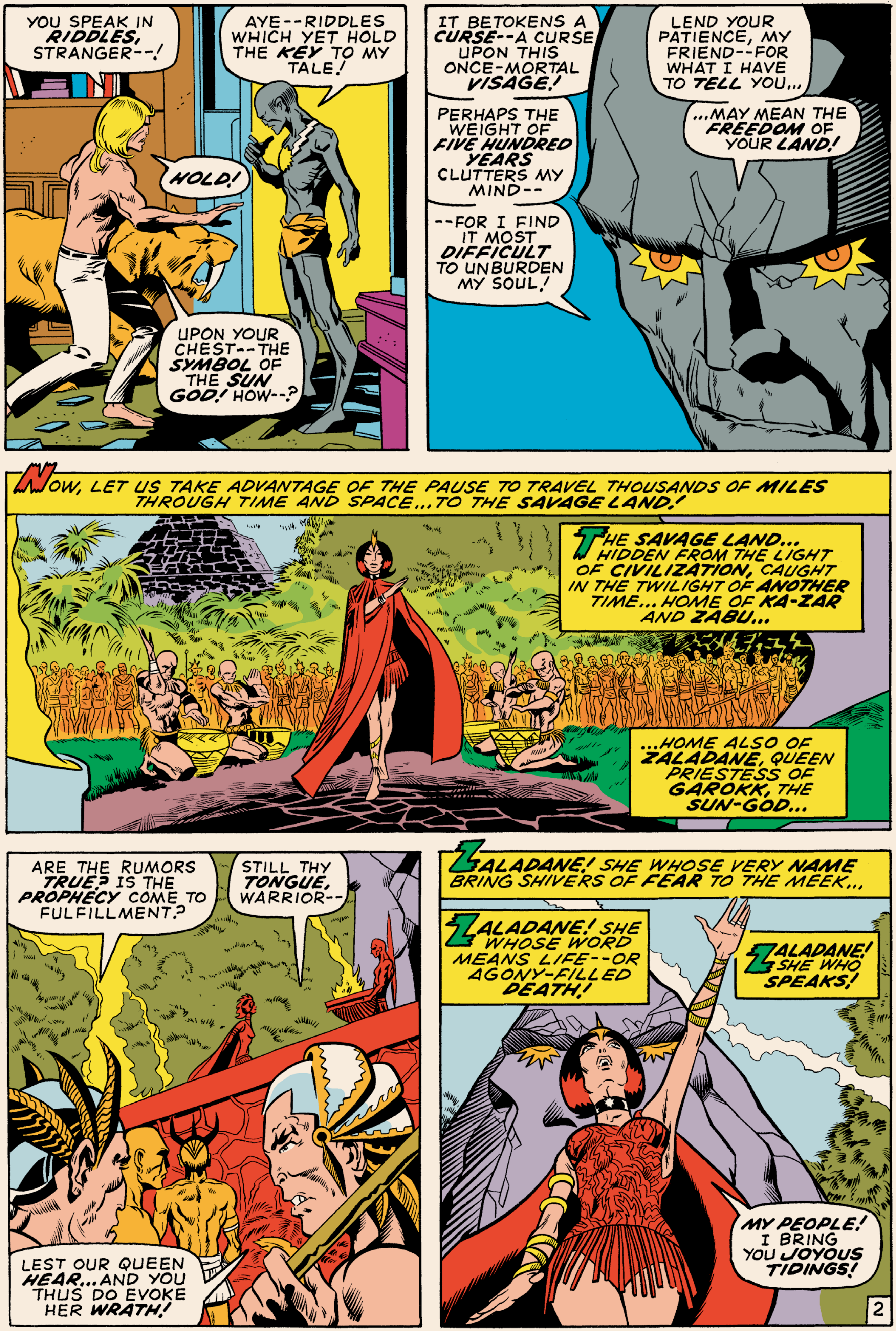
Daniel L. Gheno, 1201 E. Cota St.
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93103

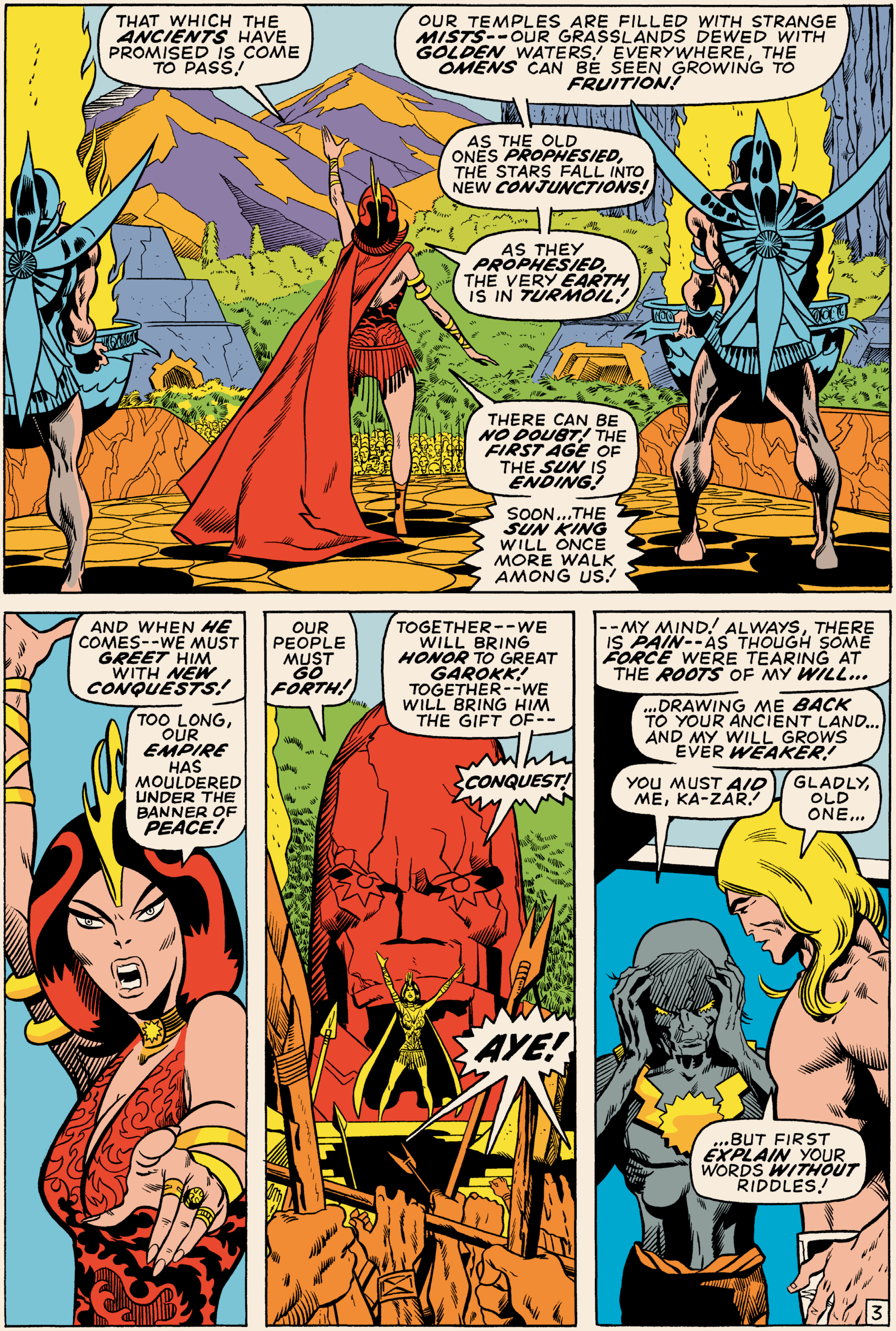
You've got some points well-taken, Dan, and we've passed on the Ka-Zar critique to our scrupulous scribe, Conway. With reference to the odd way Ka-Zar spoke in those earlier issues, Conway said: "Doth not all who walk this planet's face so speak most eloquently?" We're keeping our eye on that boy, folks.

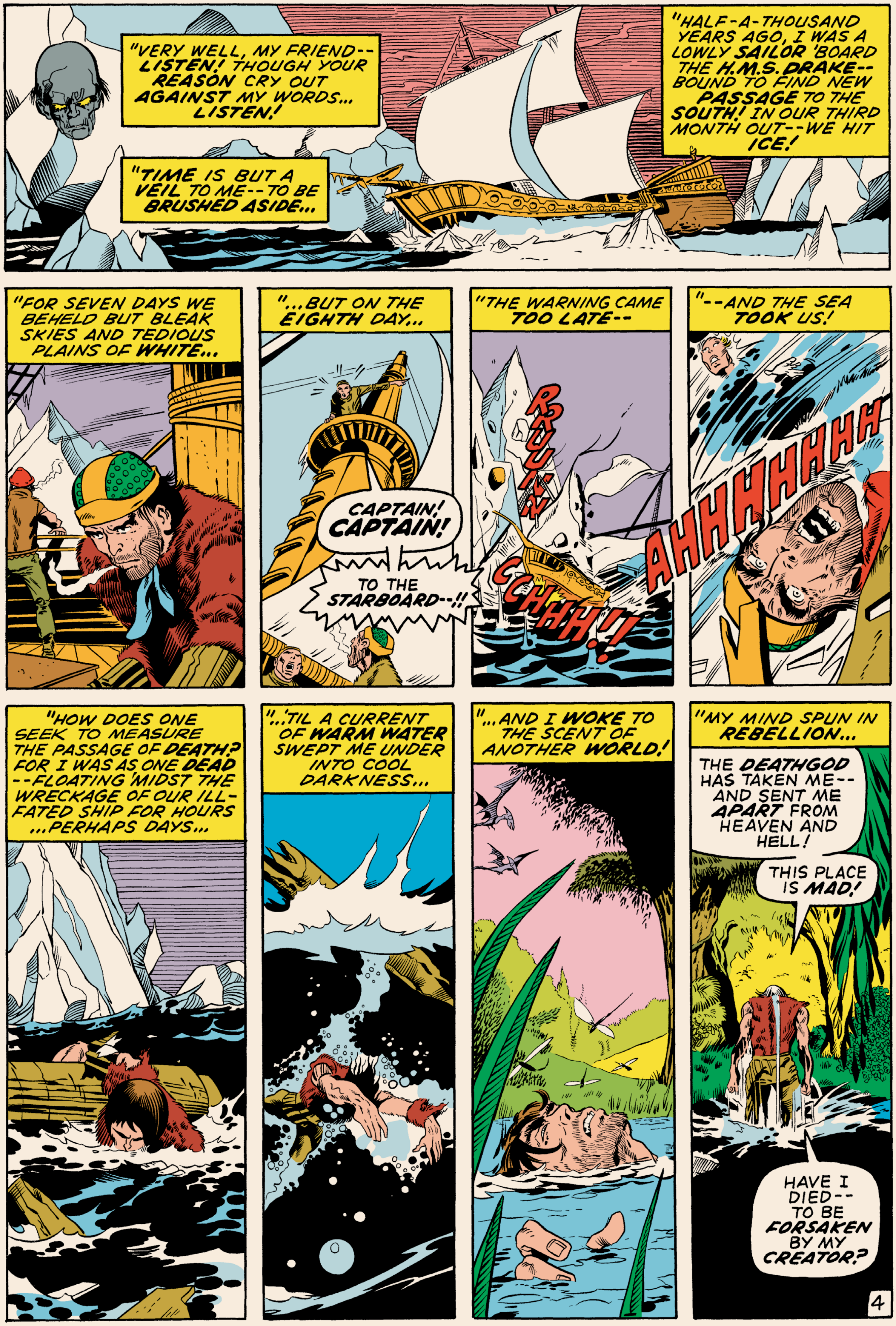
MIGHTY
MARVEL

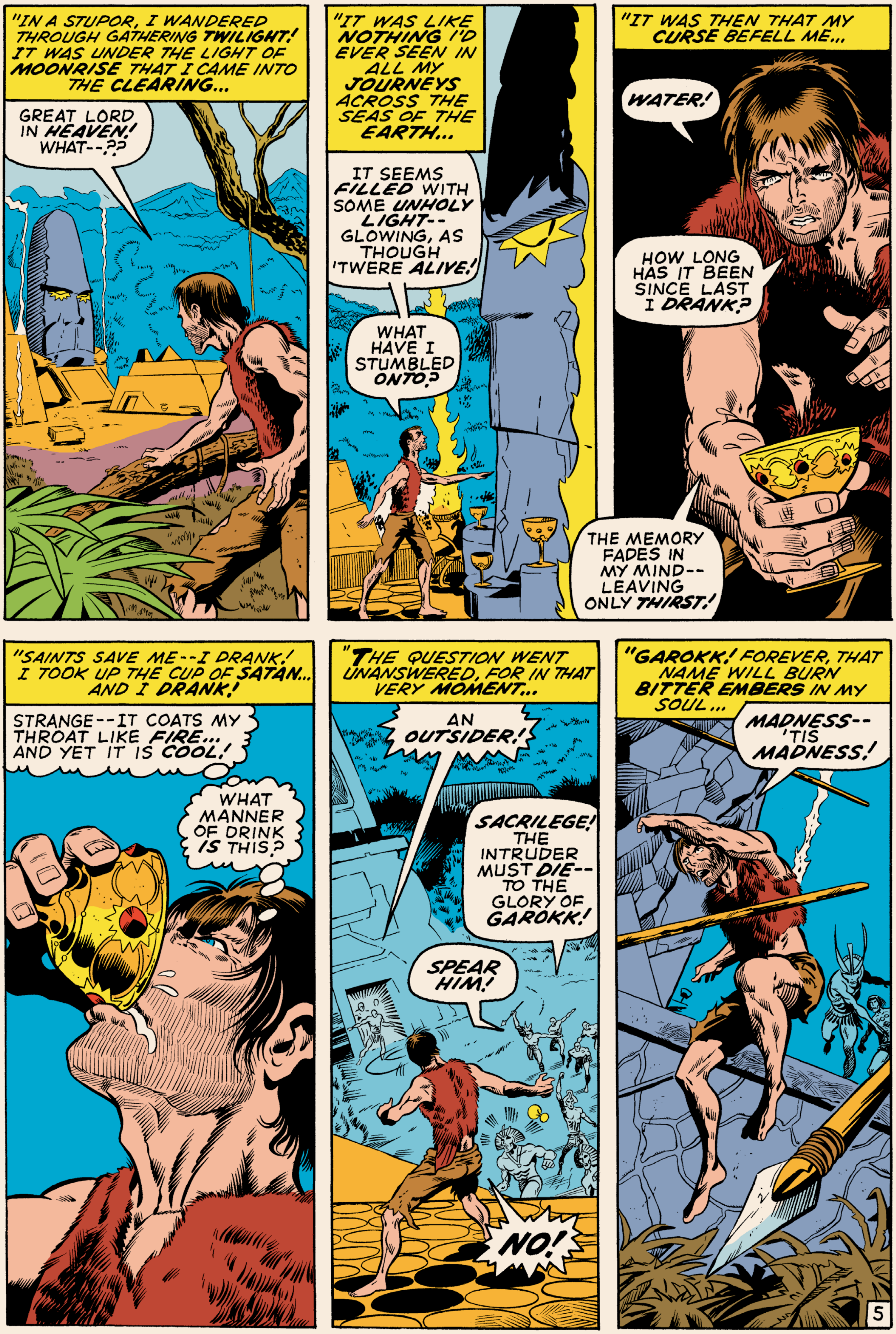
KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE JUNGLE!™

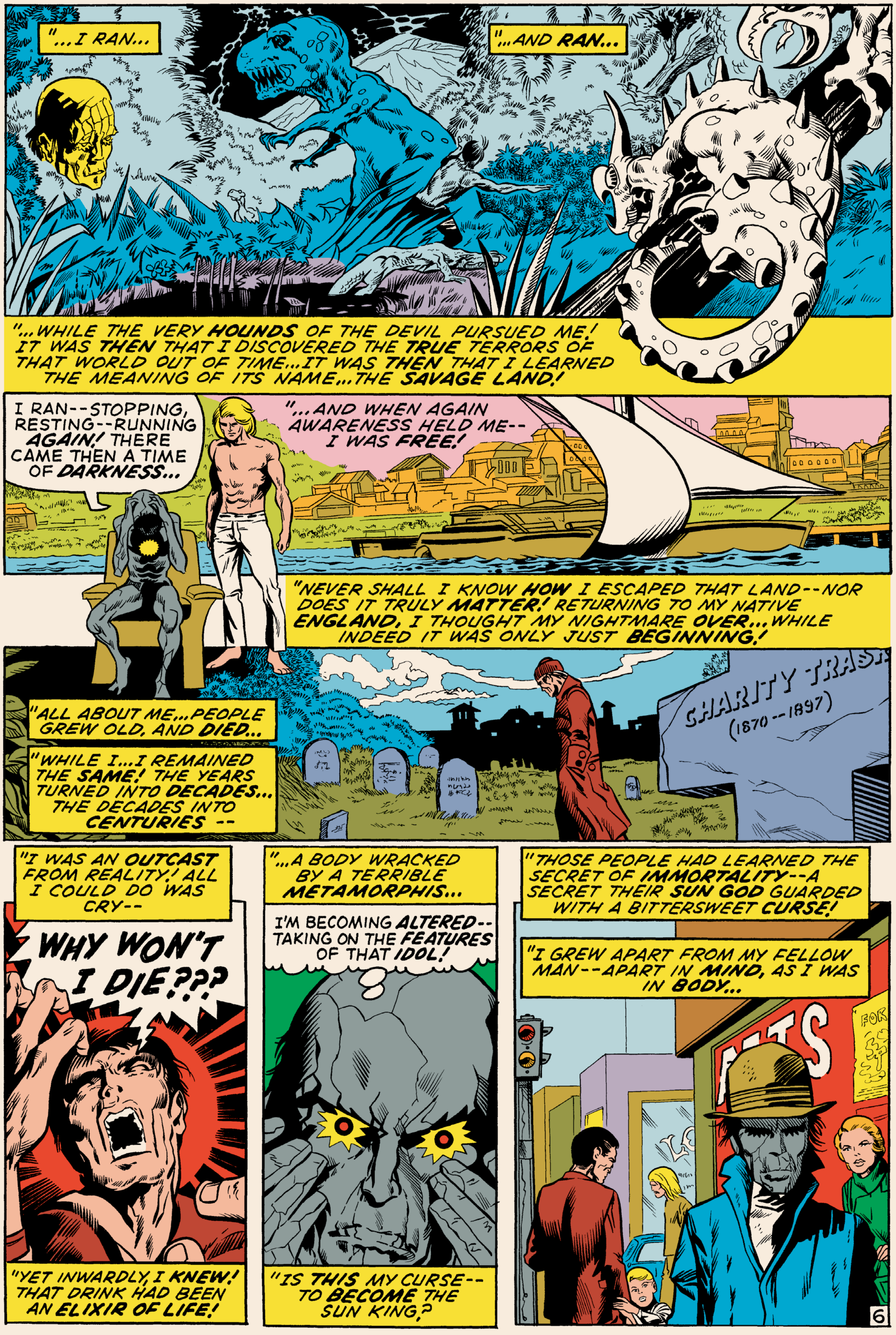

BACK TO THE SAVAGE LAND
NIGHTMARES COME IN ALL SIZES, ALL SHAPES, ALL COLORS! FOR KA-ZAR, STANDING AMIDST A RUBBLE-STREWN APARTMENT AFTER HIS STAND-OFF BATTLE WITH KRAVEN THE HUNTER, NIGHTMARE IS A THING CALLED... THE PETRIFIED MAN!
STARE IF YOU MUST, KA-ZAR... IT WILL NOT ALTER WHAT YOU SEE! MY BODY--MY VERY FLESH--IS INDEED TURNED TO LIVING STONE!
DEATH'S TOUCH IS DENIED ME-- AND THE PRICE OF THAT PRIVILEGE IS THE FORM WHICH STANDS BEFORE YOU... AND AN ANGUISH BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION!
THE WORK OF DEMONS!!
NAY, MY SAVAGE FRIEND-- OF GODS!
YOUR GUIDES ON THIS EXCURSION FLIGHT INTO THE TIMELESS WORLD ARE:
STAN LEE EDITOR • GERRY CONWAY WRITER • BARRY SMITH PENCILLER • SAM GRAINGER INKER • ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER
--NOW LET'S GET MOVING--!
400Z


YOU SPEAK IN RIDDLES, STRANGER--!
AYE--RIDDLES WHICH YET HOLD THE KEY TO MY TALE!
HOLD!
UPON YOUR CHEST--THE SYMBOL OF THE SUN GOD! HOW--?
IT BETOKENS A CURSE--A CURSE UPON THIS ONCE-MORTAL VISAGE!
PERHAPS THE WEIGHT OF FIVE HUNDRED YEARS CLUTTERS MY MIND--
--FOR I FIND IT MOST DIFFICULT TO UNBURDEN MY SOUL!
LEND YOUR PATIENCE, MY FRIEND--FOR WHAT I HAVE TO TELL YOU...
...MAY MEAN THE FREEDOM OF YOUR LAND!
NOW, LET US TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PAUSE TO TRAVEL THOUSANDS OF MILES THROUGH TIME AND SPACE...TO THE SAVAGE LAND!
THE SAVAGE LAND... HIDDEN FROM THE LIGHT OF CIVILIZATION, CAUGHT IN THE TWILIGHT OF ANOTHER TIME... HOME OF KA-ZAR AND ZABU...
...HOME ALSO OF ZALADANE, QUEEN PRIESTESS OF GAROKK, THE SUN-GOD...
ARE THE RUMORS TRUE? IS THE PROPHECY COME TO FULFILLMENT?
STILL THY TONGUE, WARRIOR--
LEST OUR QUEEN HEAR...AND YOU THUS DO EVOKE HER WRATH!
ZALADANE! SHE WHOSE VERY NAME BRING SHIVERS OF FEAR TO THE MEEK...
ZALADANE! SHE WHOSE WORD MEANS LIFE--OR AGONY-FILLED DEATH!
ZALADANE! SHE WHO SPEAKS!
MY PEOPLE! I BRING YOU JOYOUS TIDINGS!
2

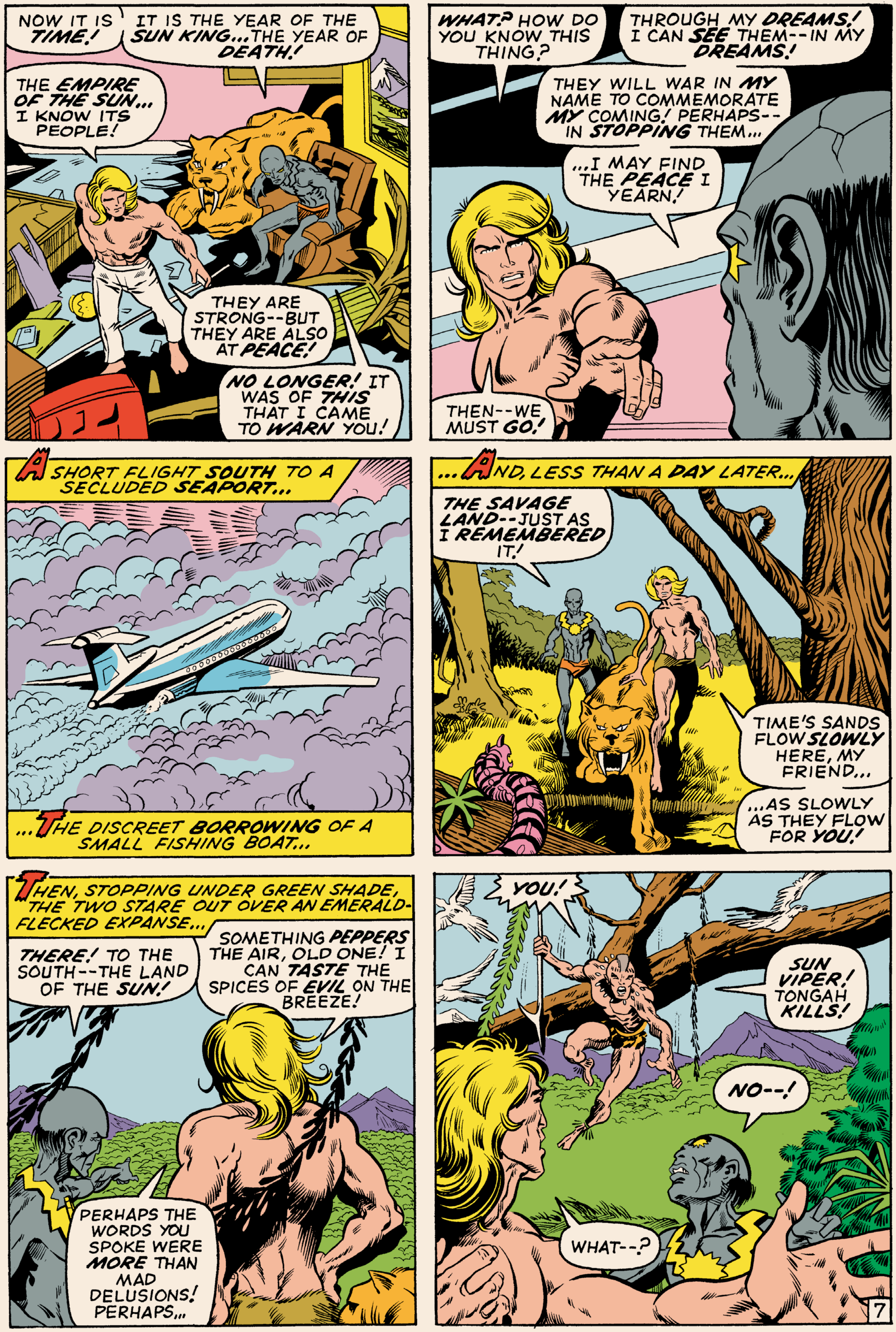

THAT WHICH THE ANCIENTS HAVE PROMISED IS COME TO PASS!
OUR TEMPLES ARE FILLED WITH STRANGE MISTS--OUR GRASSLANDS DEWED WITH GOLDEN WATERS! EVERYWHERE, THE OMENS CAN BE SEEN GROWING TO FRUITION!
AS THE OLD ONES PROPHESIED, THE STARS FALL INTO NEW CONJUNCTIONS!
AS THEY PROPHESIED, THE VERY EARTH IS IN TURMOIL!
THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT! THE FIRST AGE OF THE SUN IS ENDING!
SOON...THE SUN KING WILL ONCE MORE WALK AMONG US!
AND WHEN HE COMES--WE MUST GREET HIM WITH NEW CONQUESTS!
TOO LONG, OUR EMPIRE HAS MOULDERED UNDER THE BANNER OF PEACE!
OUR PEOPLE MUST GO FORTH!
TOGETHER--WE WILL BRING HONOR TO GREAT GAROKK! TOGETHER--WE WILL BRING HIM THE GIFT OF--
CONQUEST!
AYE!
--MY MIND! ALWAYS, THERE IS PAIN--AS THOUGH SOME FORCE WERE TEARING AT THE ROOTS OF MY WILL...
...DRAWING ME BACK TO YOUR ANCIENT LAND... AND MY WILL GROWS EVER WEAKER!
YOU MUST AID ME, KA-ZAR!
GLADLY, OLD ONE...
...BUT FIRST EXPLAIN YOUR WORDS WITHOUT RIDDLES!
3

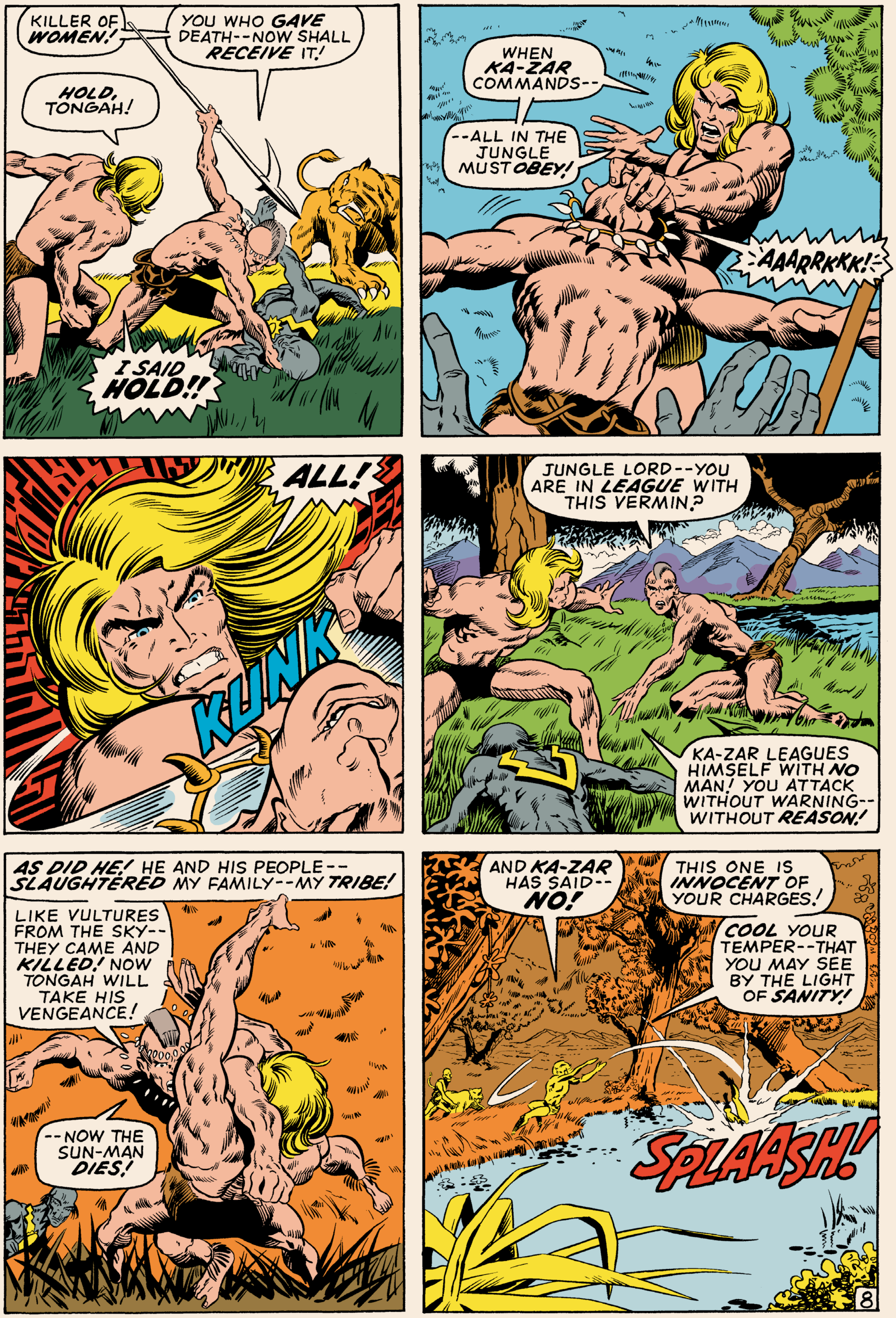

"VERY WELL, MY FRIEND-- LISTEN! THOUGH YOUR REASON CRY OUT AGAINST MY WORDS... LISTEN!
"TIME IS BUT A VEIL TO ME--TO BE BRUSHED ASIDE...
"HALF-A-THOUSAND YEARS AGO, I WAS A LOWLY SAILOR 'BOARD THE H.M.S. DRAKE-- BOUND TO FIND NEW PASSAGE TO THE SOUTH! IN OUR THIRD MONTH OUT--WE HIT ICE!
"FOR SEVEN DAYS WE BEHELD BUT BLEAK SKIES AND TEDIOUS PLAINS OF WHITE...
"...BUT ON THE EIGHTH DAY...
CAPTAIN! CAPTAIN!
TO THE STARBOARD--!!
"THE WARNING CAME TOO LATE--
RRUUMN
CCHHH!!
"--AND THE SEA TOOK US!
AHHHHHHHH
"HOW DOES ONE SEEK TO MEASURE THE PASSAGE OF DEATH? FOR I WAS AS ONE DEAD --FLOATING 'MIDST THE WRECKAGE OF OUR ILL-FATED SHIP FOR HOURS ...PERHAPS DAYS...
"...'TIL A CURRENT OF WARM WATER SWEPT ME UNDER INTO COOL DARKNESS...
"...AND I WOKE TO THE SCENT OF ANOTHER WORLD!
"MY MIND SPUN IN REBELLION...
THE DEATHGOD HAS TAKEN ME-- AND SENT ME APART FROM HEAVEN AND HELL!
THIS PLACE IS MAD!
HAVE I DIED-- TO BE FORSAKEN BY MY CREATOR?
4

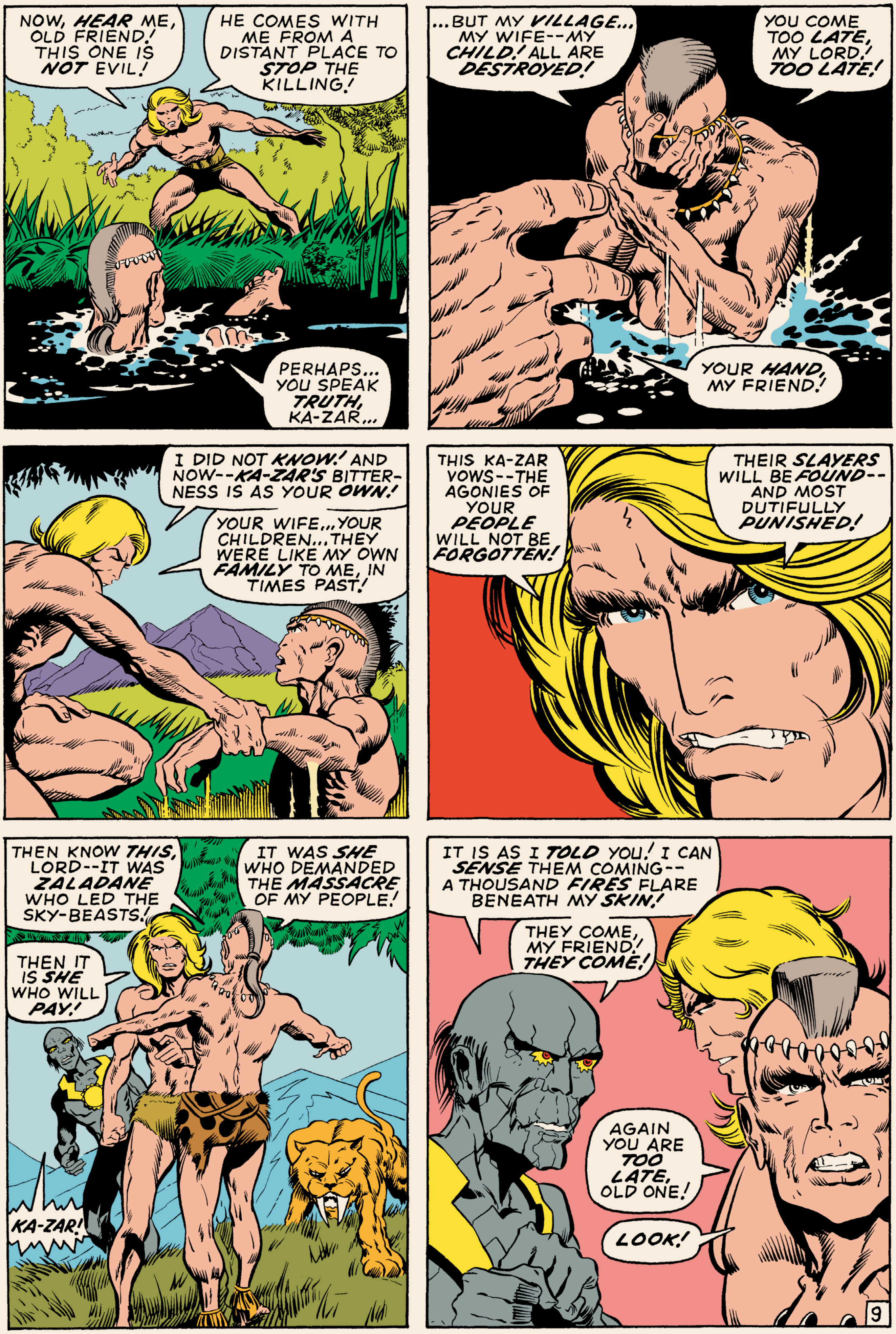

"IN A STUPOR, I WANDERED THROUGH GATHERING TWILIGHT! IT WAS UNDER THE LIGHT OF MOONRISE THAT I CAME INTO THE CLEARING...
GREAT LORD IN HEAVEN! WHAT--?!?
"IT WAS LIKE NOTHING I'D EVER SEEN IN ALL MY JOURNEYS ACROSS THE SEAS OF THE EARTH...
IT SEEMS FILLED WITH SOME UNHOLY LIGHT-- GLOWING, AS THOUGH 'TWERE ALIVE!
WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED ONTO?
"IT WAS THEN THAT MY CURSE BEFELL ME...
WATER!
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE LAST I DRANK?
THE MEMORY FADES IN MY MIND-- LEAVING ONLY THIRST!
"SAINTS SAVE ME--I DRANK! I TOOK UP THE CUP OF SATAN... AND I DRANK!
STRANGE--IT COATS MY THROAT LIKE FIRE... AND YET IT IS COOL!
WHAT MANNER OF DRINK IS THIS?
"THE QUESTION WENT UNANSWERED, FOR IN THAT VERY MOMENT...
AN OUTSIDER!
SACRILEGE! THE INTRUDER MUST DIE-- TO THE GLORY OF GAROKK!
SPEAR HIM!
NO!
"GAROKK! FOREVER, THAT NAME WILL BURN BITTER EMBERS IN MY SOUL...
MADNESS-- 'TIS MADNESS!
5

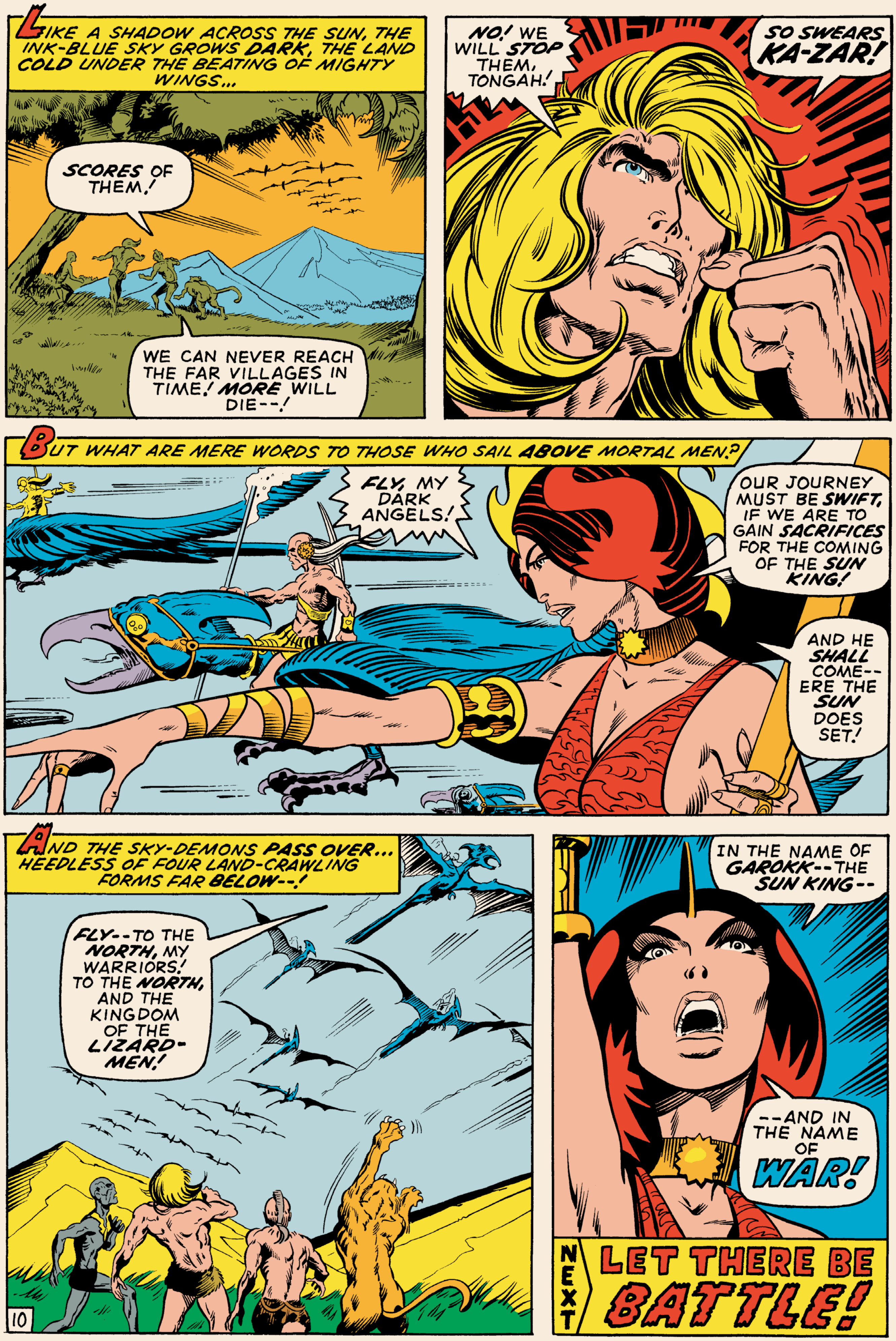

"...I RAN...
"...AND RAN...
"...WHILE THE VERY HOUNDS OF THE DEVIL PURSUED ME! IT WAS THEN THAT I DISCOVERED THE TRUE TERRORS OF THAT WORLD OUT OF TIME...IT WAS THEN THAT I LEARNED THE MEANING OF ITS NAME...THE SAVAGE LAND!
I RAN--STOPPING, RESTING--RUNNING AGAIN! THERE CAME THEN A TIME OF DARKNESS...
"...AND WHEN AGAIN AWARENESS HELD ME--I WAS FREE!
"NEVER SHALL I KNOW HOW I ESCAPED THAT LAND--NOR DOES IT TRULY MATTER! RETURNING TO MY NATIVE ENGLAND, I THOUGHT MY NIGHTMARE OVER...WHILE INDEED IT WAS ONLY JUST BEGINNING!
CHARITY TRAS
(1870--1897)
"ALL ABOUT ME...PEOPLE GREW OLD, AND DIED...
"WHILE I...I REMAINED THE SAME! THE YEARS TURNED INTO DECADES... THE DECADES INTO CENTURIES --
"I WAS AN OUTCAST FROM REALITY! ALL I COULD DO WAS CRY--
WHY WON'T I DIE???
"YET INWARDLY, I KNEW! THAT DRINK HAD BEEN AN ELIXIR OF LIFE!
"...A BODY WRACKED BY A TERRIBLE METAMORPHIS...
I'M BECOMING ALTERED--TAKING ON THE FEATURES OF THAT IDOL!
"IS THIS MY CURSE--TO BECOME THE SUN KING?
"THOSE PEOPLE HAD LEARNED THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY--A SECRET THEIR SUN GOD GUARDED WITH A BITTERSWEET CURSE!
"I GREW APART FROM MY FELLOW MAN--APART IN MIND, AS I WAS IN BODY...
6

]

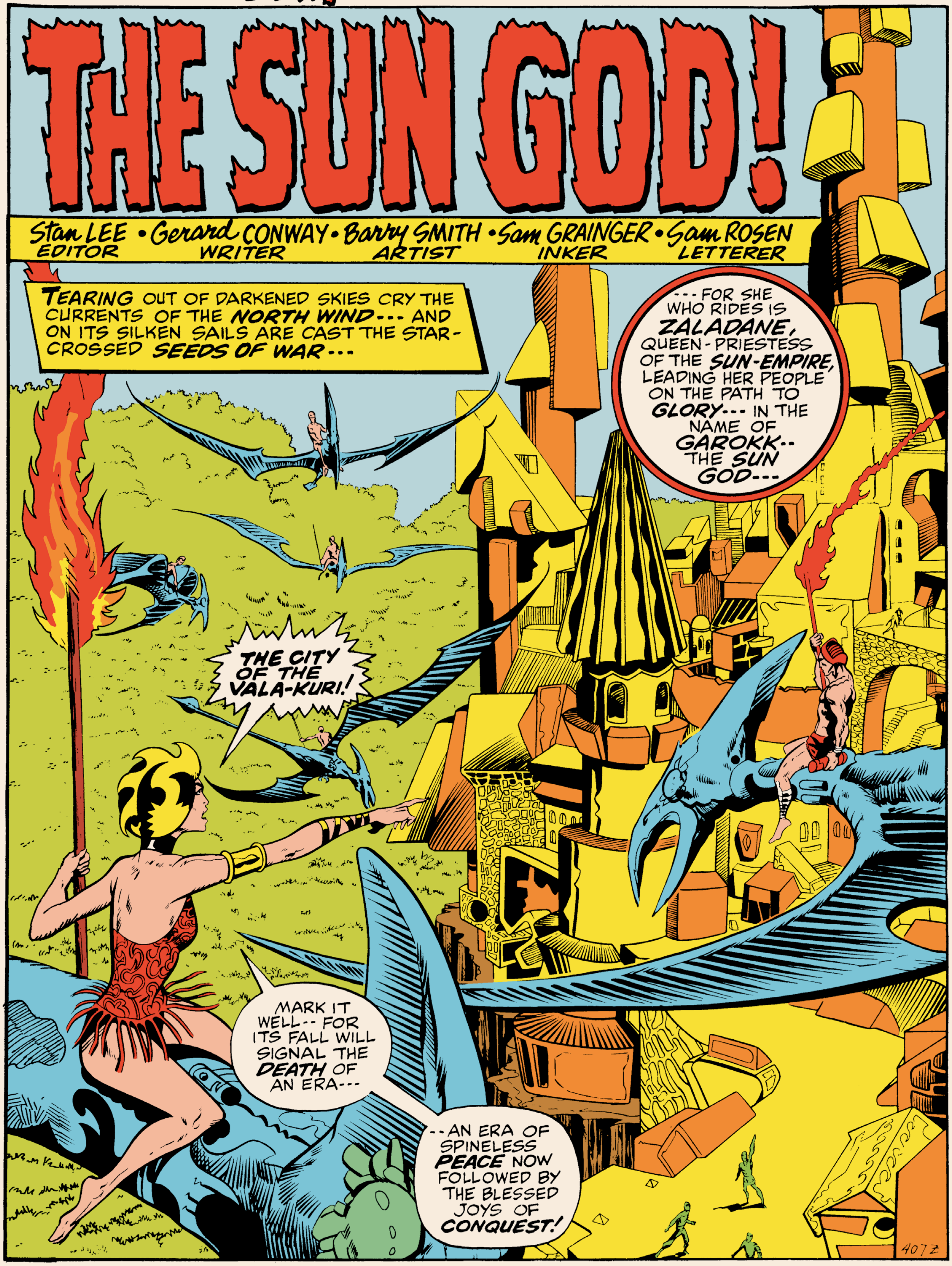

NOW IT IS *TIME!*
IT IS THE YEAR OF THE *SUN KING*... THE YEAR OF *DEATH!*
THE *EMPIRE OF THE SUN*... I KNOW ITS PEOPLE!
THEY ARE STRONG--BUT THEY ARE ALSO AT *PEACE!*
NO LONGER! IT WAS OF *THIS* THAT I CAME TO *WARN* YOU!
WHAT? HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS THING?
THROUGH MY *DREAMS!* I CAN *SEE* THEM--IN MY *DREAMS!*
THEY WILL WAR IN *MY* NAME TO COMMEMORATE *MY* COMING! PERHAPS-- IN *STOPPING* THEM...
...I MAY FIND THE *PEACE* I YEARN!
THEN--WE MUST *GO!*
A SHORT FLIGHT SOUTH TO A SECLUDED SEAPORT...
...THE DISCREET BORROWING OF A SMALL FISHING BOAT...
...AND, LESS THAN A DAY LATER...
THE SAVAGE LAND--JUST AS *I REMEMBERED* IT!
TIME'S SANDS FLOW *SLOWLY* HERE, MY FRIEND...
...AS SLOWLY AS THEY FLOW FOR *YOU!*
THEN, STOPPING UNDER GREEN SHADE, THE TWO STARE OUT OVER AN EMERALD-FLECKED EXPANSE...
THERE! TO THE SOUTH--THE LAND OF THE *SUN!*
SOMETHING *PEPPERS* THE AIR, OLD ONE! I CAN *TASTE* THE SPICES OF *EVIL* ON THE BREEZE!
PERHAPS THE WORDS YOU SPOKE WERE *MORE* THAN MAD DELUSIONS! PERHAPS...
YOU!
SUN VIPER! TONGAH *KILLS!*
NO--!
WHAT--?
7

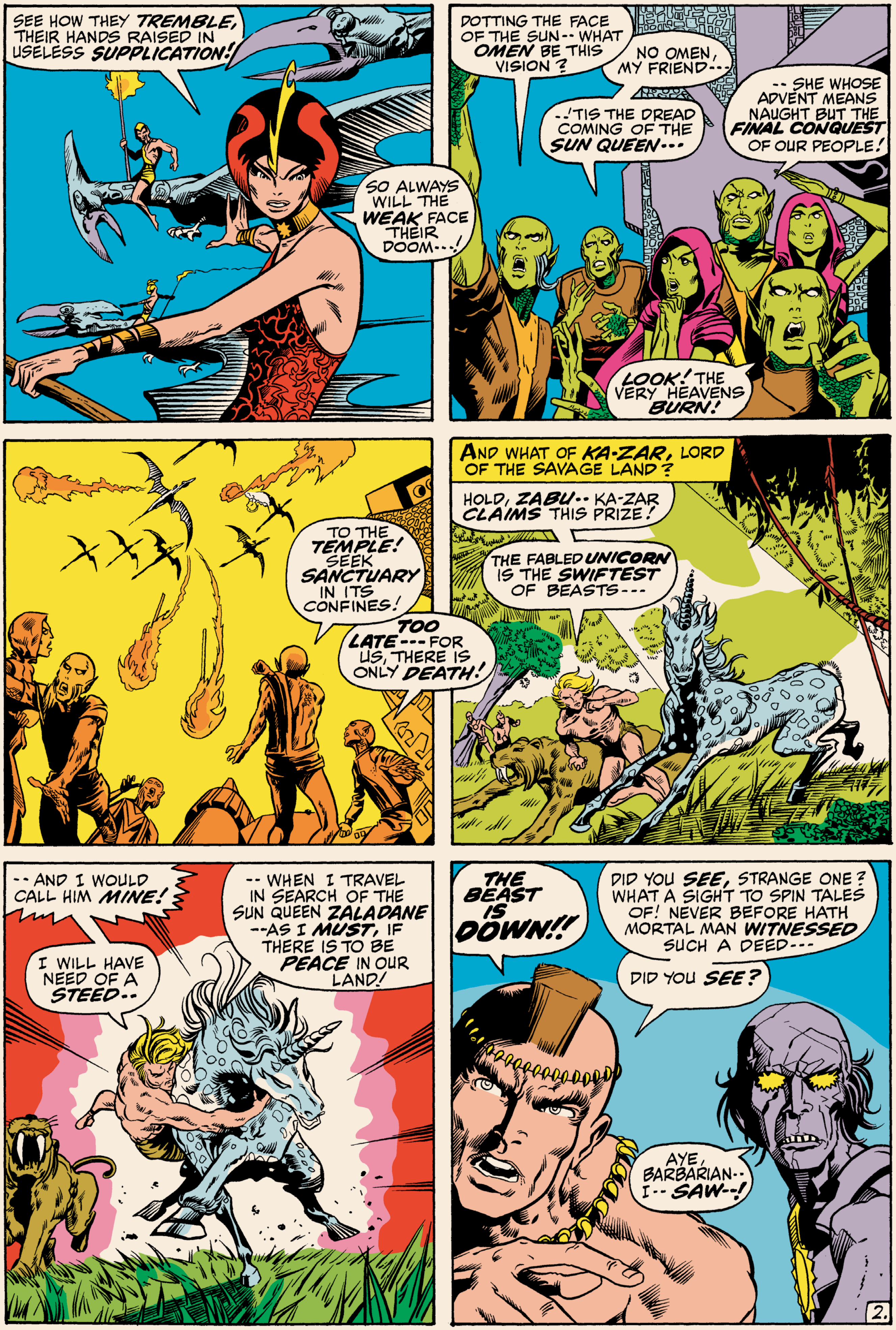

KILLER OF WOMEN!
YOU WHO GAVE DEATH--NOW SHALL RECEIVE IT!
HOLD, TONGAH!
I SAID HOLD!!
WHEN KA-ZAR COMMANDS--
--ALL IN THE JUNGLE MUST OBEY!
AAARRKKK!
ALL!
KUNK
JUNGLE LORD--YOU ARE IN LEAGUE WITH THIS VERMIN?
KA-ZAR LEAGUES HIMSELF WITH NO MAN! YOU ATTACK WITHOUT WARNING--WITHOUT REASON!
AS DID HE! HE AND HIS PEOPLE--SLAUGHTERED MY FAMILY--MY TRIBE!
LIKE VULTURES FROM THE SKY--THEY CAME AND KILLED! NOW TONGAH WILL TAKE HIS VENGEANCE!
--NOW THE SUN-MAN DIES!
AND KA-ZAR HAS SAID--NO!
THIS ONE IS INNOCENT OF YOUR CHARGES!
COOL YOUR TEMPER--THAT YOU MAY SEE BY THE LIGHT OF SANITY!
SPLAASH!
8

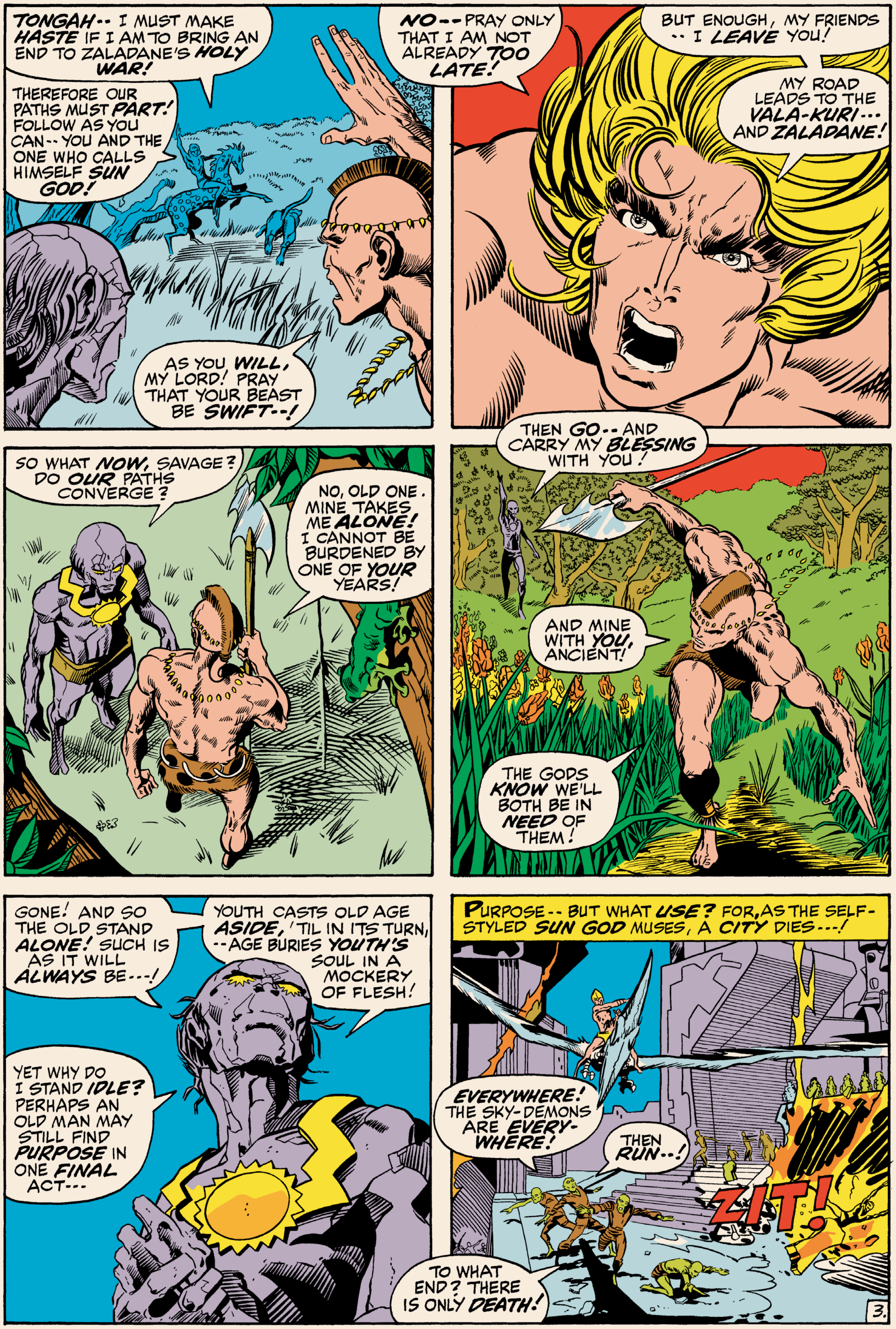

NOW, HEAR ME, OLD FRIEND! THIS ONE IS NOT EVIL!
HE COMES WITH ME FROM A DISTANT PLACE TO STOP THE KILLING!
PERHAPS... YOU SPEAK TRUTH, KA-ZAR...
...BUT MY VILLAGE... MY WIFE--MY CHILD! ALL ARE DESTROYED!
YOU COME TOO LATE, MY LORD! TOO LATE!
YOUR HAND, MY FRIEND!
I DID NOT KNOW! AND NOW--KA-ZAR'S BITTERNESS IS AS YOUR OWN!
YOUR WIFE... YOUR CHILDREN... THEY WERE LIKE MY OWN FAMILY TO ME, IN TIMES PAST!
THIS KA-ZAR VOWS--THE AGONIES OF YOUR PEOPLE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN!
THEIR SLAYERS WILL BE FOUND--AND MOST DUTIFULLY PUNISHED!
THEN KNOW THIS, LORD--IT WAS ZALADANE WHO LED THE SKY-BEASTS!
IT WAS SHE WHO DEMANDED THE MASSACRE OF MY PEOPLE!
THEN IT IS SHE WHO WILL PAY!
KA-ZAR!
IT IS AS I TOLD YOU! I CAN SENSE THEM COMING--A THOUSAND FIRES FLARE BENEATH MY SKIN!
THEY COME, MY FRIEND! THEY COME!
AGAIN YOU ARE TOO LATE, OLD ONE!
LOOK!
9

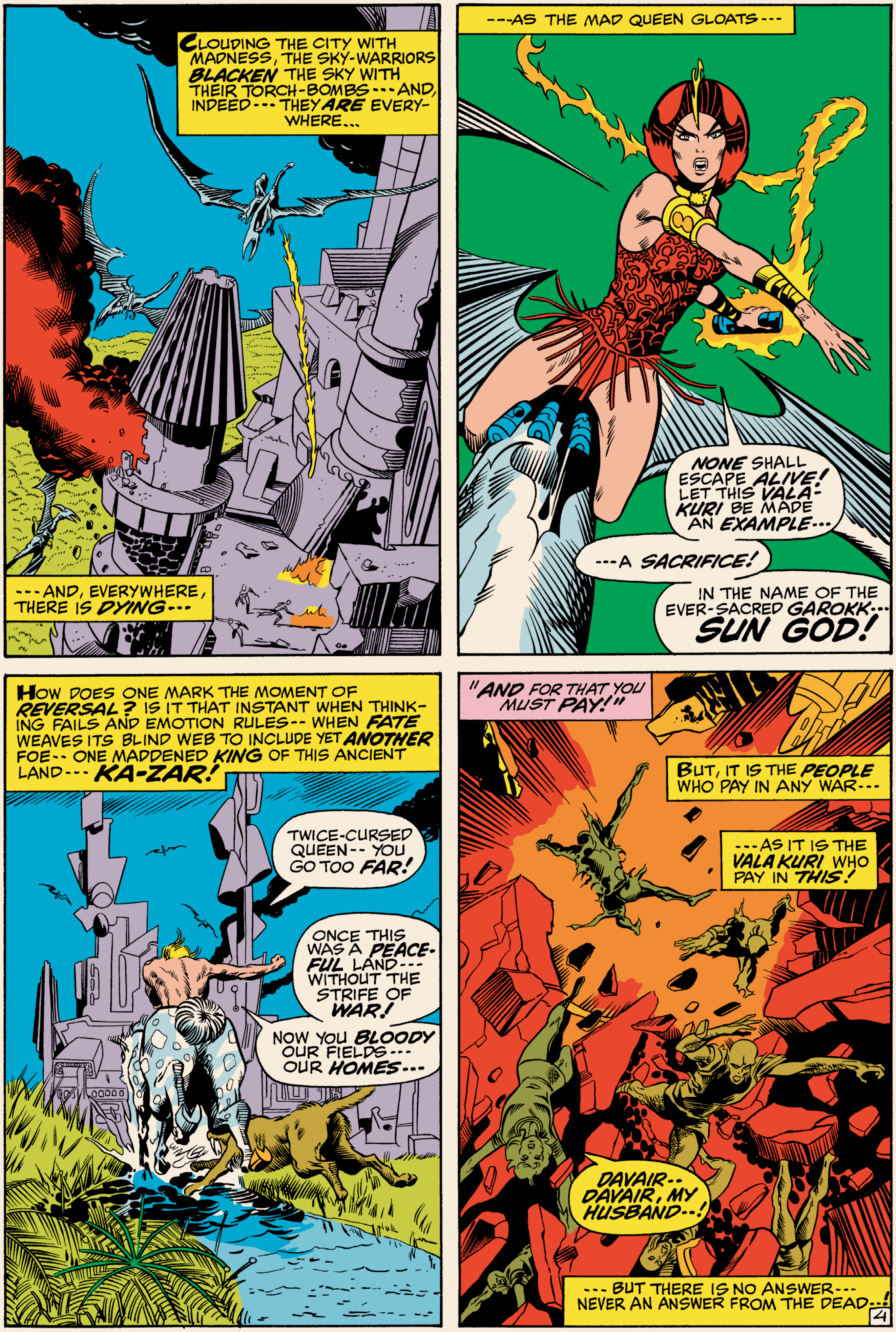

LIKE A SHADOW ACROSS THE SUN, THE INK-BLUE SKY GROWS DARK, THE LAND COLD UNDER THE BEATING OF MIGHTY WINGS...
SCORES OF THEM.!
WE CAN NEVER REACH THE FAR VILLAGES IN TIME! MORE WILL DIE--!
NO! WE WILL STOP THEM, TONGAH!
SO SWEARS KA-ZAR!
BUT WHAT ARE MERE WORDS TO THOSE WHO SAIL ABOVE MORTAL MEN?
FLY, MY DARK ANGELS!
OUR JOURNEY MUST BE SWIFT, IF WE ARE TO GAIN SACRIFICES FOR THE COMING OF THE SUN KING!
AND HE SHALL COME-- ERE THE SUN DOES SET!
AND THE SKY-DEMONS PASS OVER... HEEDLESS OF FOUR LAND-CRAWLING FORMS FAR BELOW--!
FLY--TO THE NORTH, MY WARRIORS! TO THE NORTH, AND THE KINGDOM OF THE LIZARD-MEN!
10
IN THE NAME OF GAROKK--THE SUN KING--
--AND IN THE NAME OF WAR!
NEXT
LET THERE BE BATTLE!

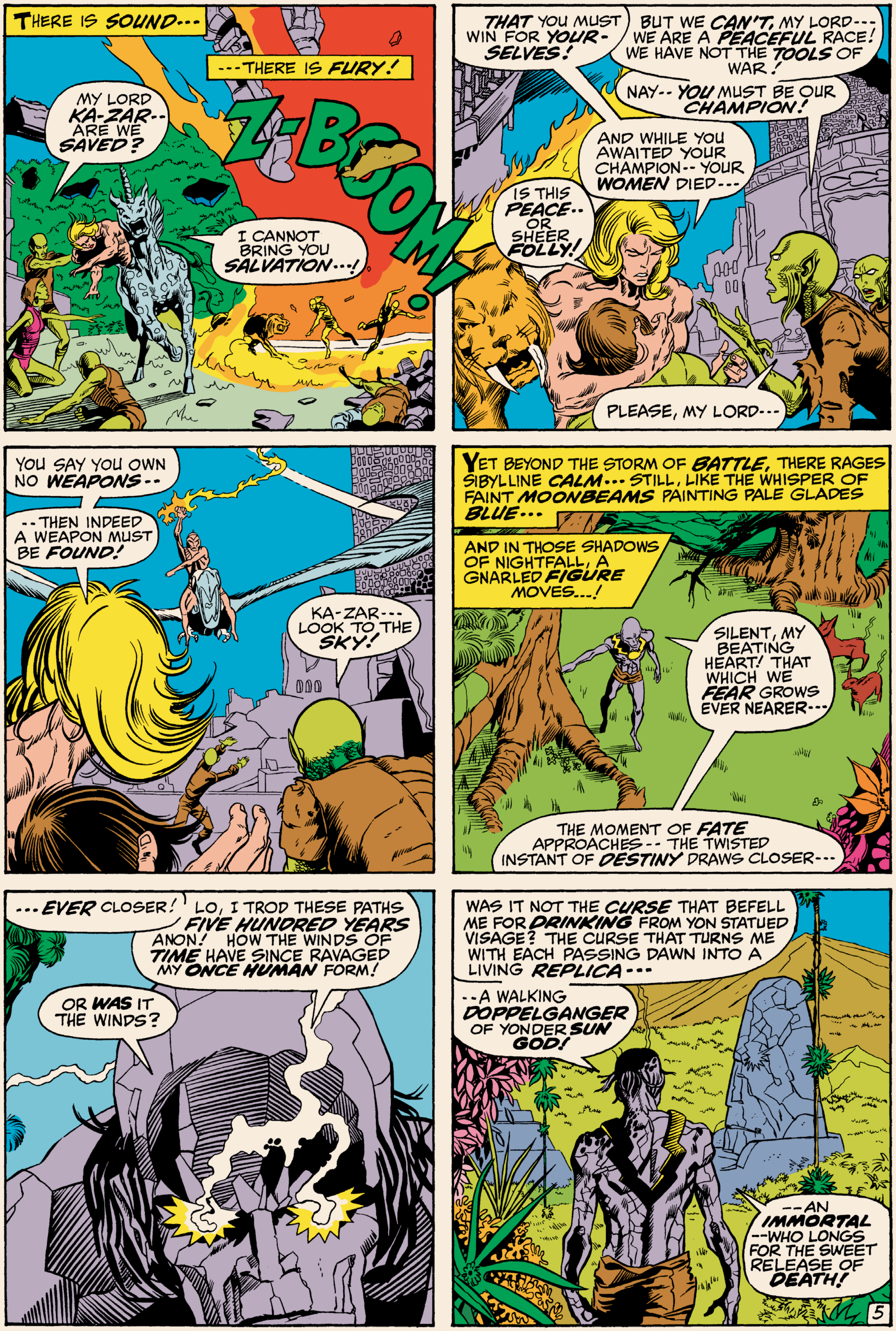
KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE JUNGLE!™

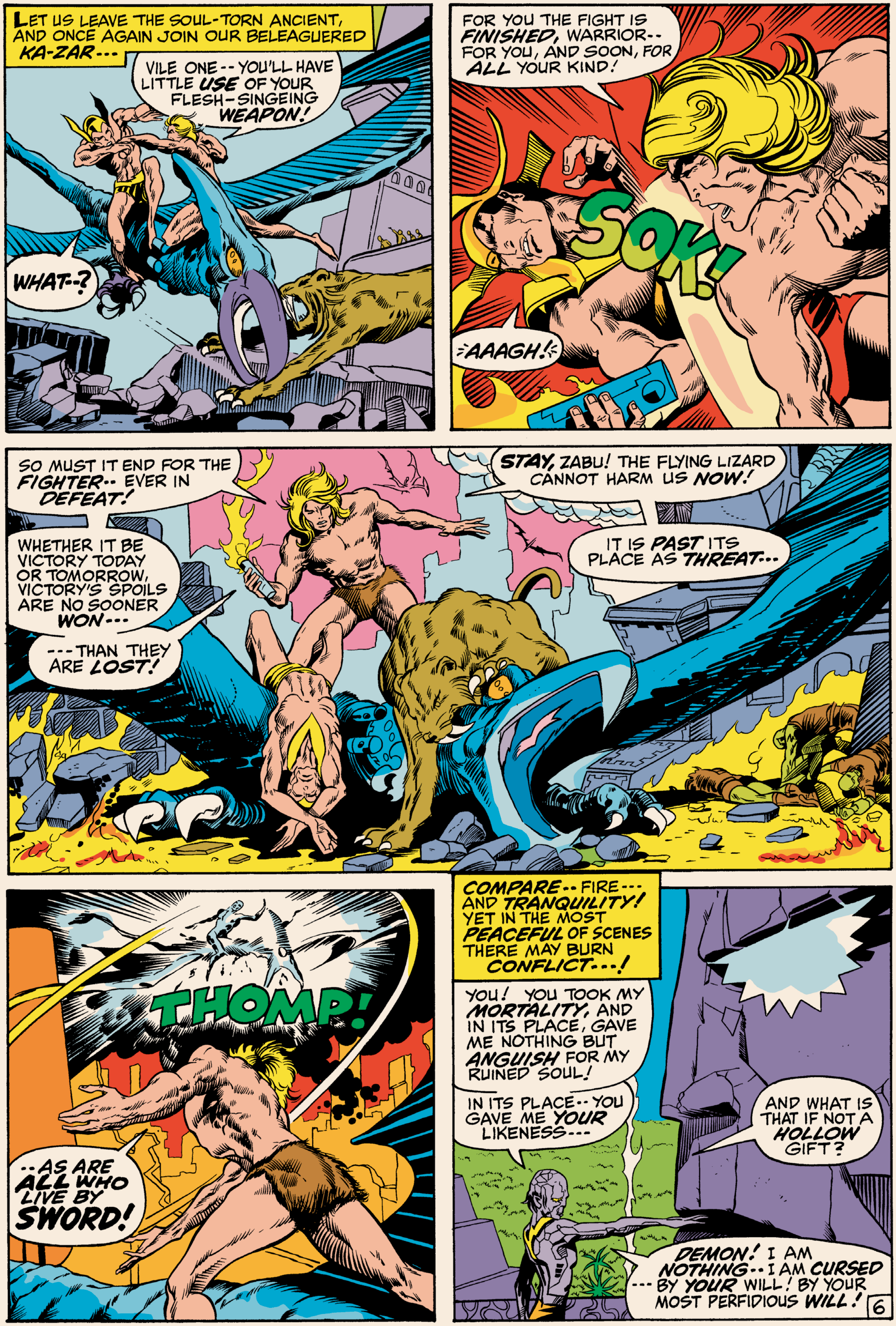

THE SUN GOD!
Stan LEE • Gerard CONWAY • Barry SMITH • Sam GRAINGER • Sam ROSEN
EDITOR WRITER ARTIST INKER LETTERER
TEARING OUT OF DARKENED SKIES CRY THE CURRENTS OF THE NORTH WIND--- AND ON ITS SILKEN SAILS ARE CAST THE STAR-CROSSED SEEDS OF WAR---
---FOR SHE WHO RIDES IS ZALADANE, QUEEN-PRIESTESS OF THE SUN-EMPIRE, LEADING HER PEOPLE ON THE PATH TO GLORY--- IN THE NAME OF GAROKK.. THE SUN GOD---
THE CITY OF THE VALA-KURI!
MARK IT WELL-- FOR ITS FALL WILL SIGNAL THE DEATH OF AN ERA---
--AN ERA OF SPINELESS PEACE NOW FOLLOWED BY THE BLESSED JOYS OF CONQUEST!
407Z

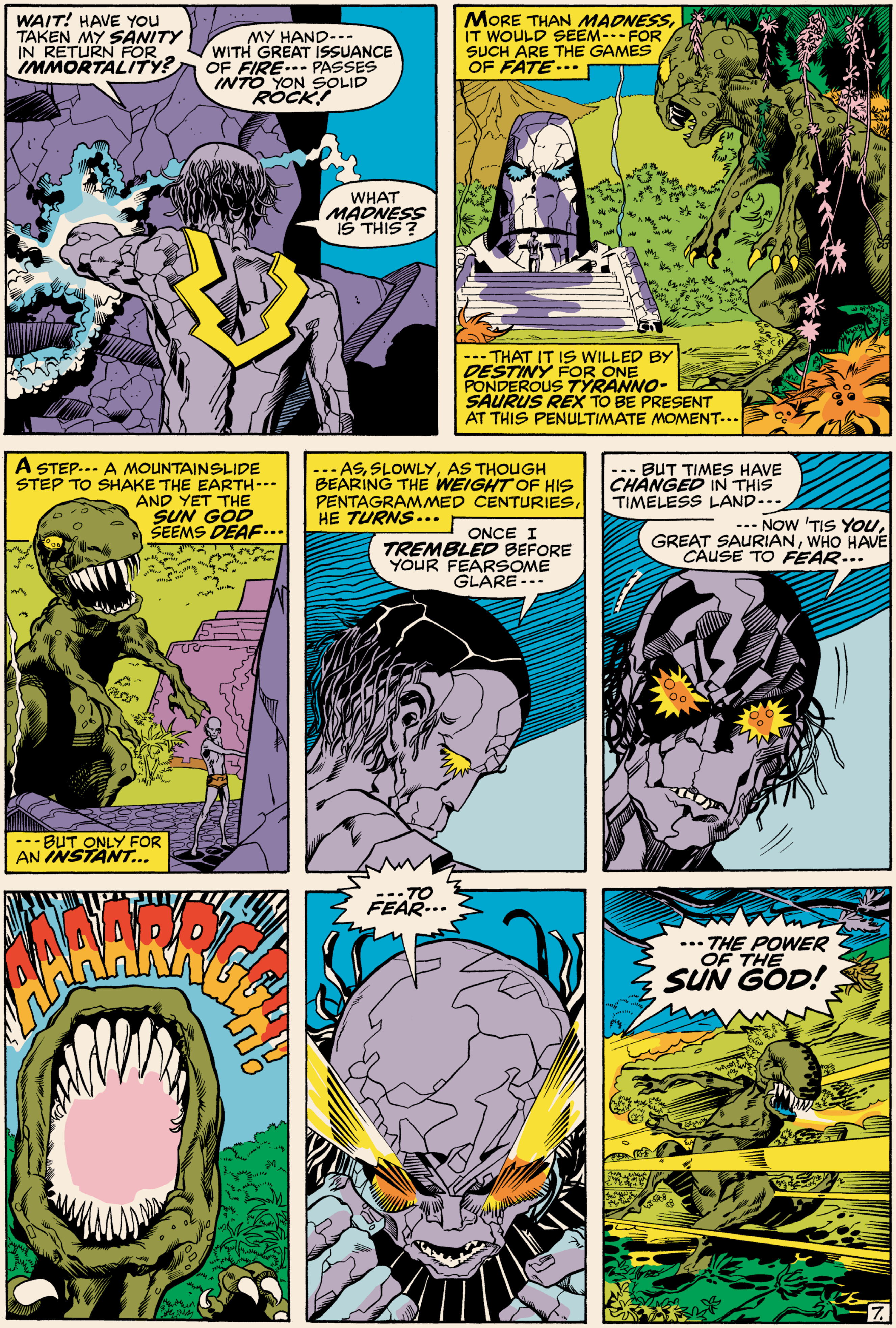

SEE HOW THEY TREMBLE, THEIR HANDS RAISED IN USELESS SUPPLICATION!
SO ALWAYS WILL THE WEAK FACE THEIR DOOM--!
DOTTING THE FACE OF THE SUN--WHAT OMEN BE THIS VISION?
NO OMEN, MY FRIEND--
--'TIS THE DREAD COMING OF THE SUN QUEEN---
--SHE WHOSE ADVENT MEANS NAUGHT BUT THE FINAL CONQUEST OF OUR PEOPLE!
LOOK! THE VERY HEAVENS BURN!
TO THE TEMPLE! SEEK SANCTUARY IN ITS CONFINES!
TOO LATE---FOR US, THERE IS ONLY DEATH!
AND WHAT OF KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE SAVAGE LAND?
HOLD, ZABU--KA-ZAR CLAIMS THIS PRIZE!
THE FABLED UNICORN IS THE SWIFTEST OF BEASTS---
--AND I WOULD CALL HIM MINE!
I WILL HAVE NEED OF A STEED--
--WHEN I TRAVEL IN SEARCH OF THE SUN QUEEN ZALADANE--AS I MUST, IF THERE IS TO BE PEACE IN OUR LAND!
THE BEAST IS DOWN!!
DID YOU SEE, STRANGE ONE? WHAT A SIGHT TO SPIN TALES OF! NEVER BEFORE HATH MORTAL MAN WITNESSED SUCH A DEED---
DID YOU SEE?
AYE, BARBARIAN-- I--SAW--!
2.

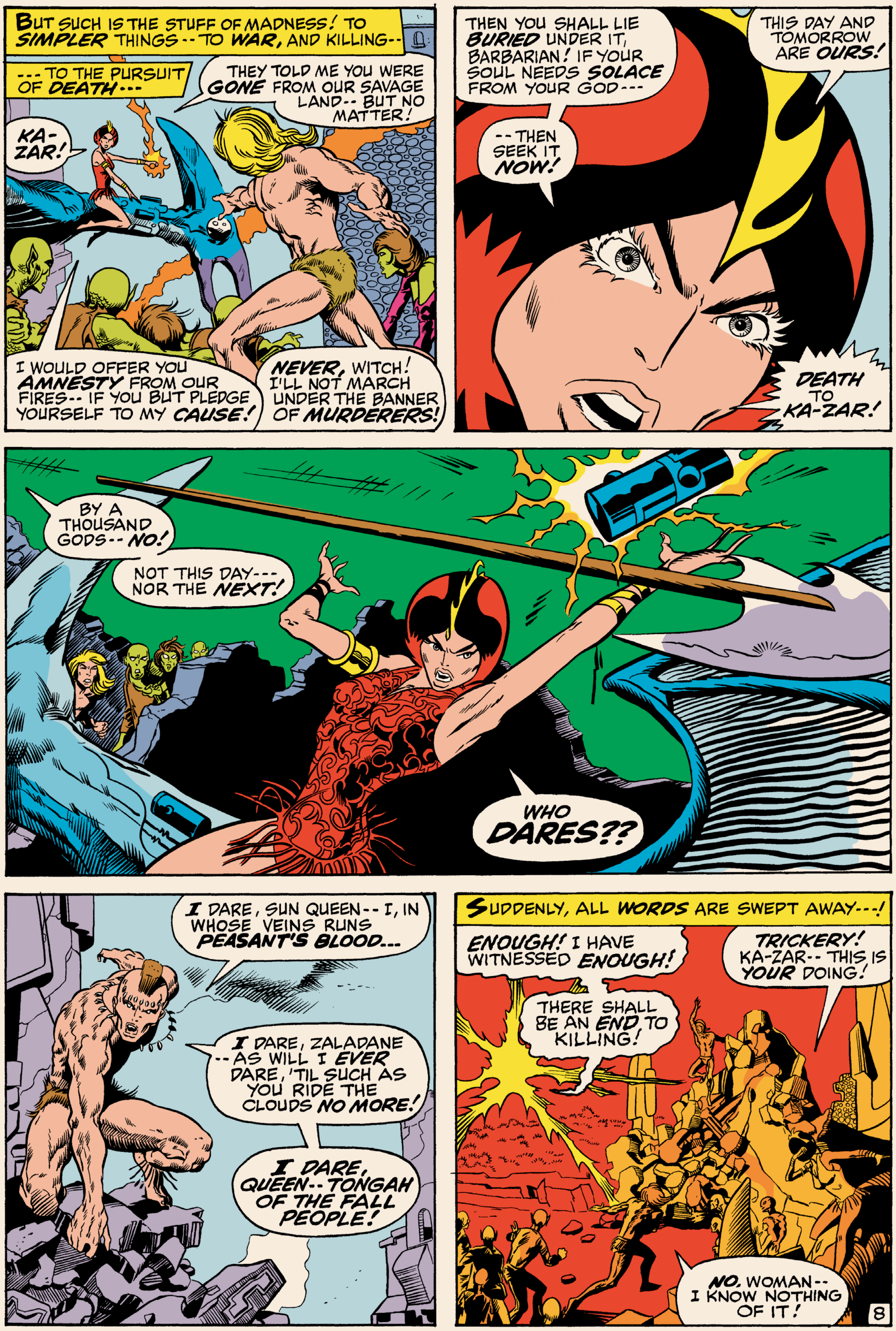

TONGAH-- I MUST MAKE HASTE IF I AM TO BRING AN END TO ZALADANE'S HOLY WAR!
THEREFORE OUR PATHS MUST PART! FOLLOW AS YOU CAN-- YOU AND THE ONE WHO CALLS HIMSELF SUN GOD!
AS YOU WILL, MY LORD! PRAY THAT YOUR BEAST BE SWIFT--!
NO--PRAY ONLY THAT I AM NOT ALREADY TOO LATE!
BUT ENOUGH, MY FRIENDS -- I LEAVE YOU!
MY ROAD LEADS TO THE VALA-KURI... AND ZALADANE!
SO WHAT NOW, SAVAGE? DO OUR PATHS CONVERGE?
NO, OLD ONE. MINE TAKES ME ALONE! I CANNOT BE BURDENED BY ONE OF YOUR YEARS!
THEN GO-- AND CARRY MY BLESSING WITH YOU!
AND MINE WITH YOU, ANCIENT!
THE GODS KNOW WE'LL BOTH BE IN NEED OF THEM!
GONE! AND SO THE OLD STAND ALONE! SUCH IS AS IT WILL ALWAYS BE---!
YOUTH CASTS OLD AGE ASIDE, 'TIL IN ITS TURN, --AGE BURIES YOUTH'S SOUL IN A MOCKERY OF FLESH!
YET WHY DO I STAND IDLE? PERHAPS AN OLD MAN MAY STILL FIND PURPOSE IN ONE FINAL ACT---
PURPOSE-- BUT WHAT USE? FOR, AS THE SELF-STYLED SUN GOD MUSES, A CITY DIES---!
EVERYWHERE! THE SKY-DEMONS ARE EVERYWHERE!
THEN RUN--!
ZIT!
TO WHAT END? THERE IS ONLY DEATH!
3.

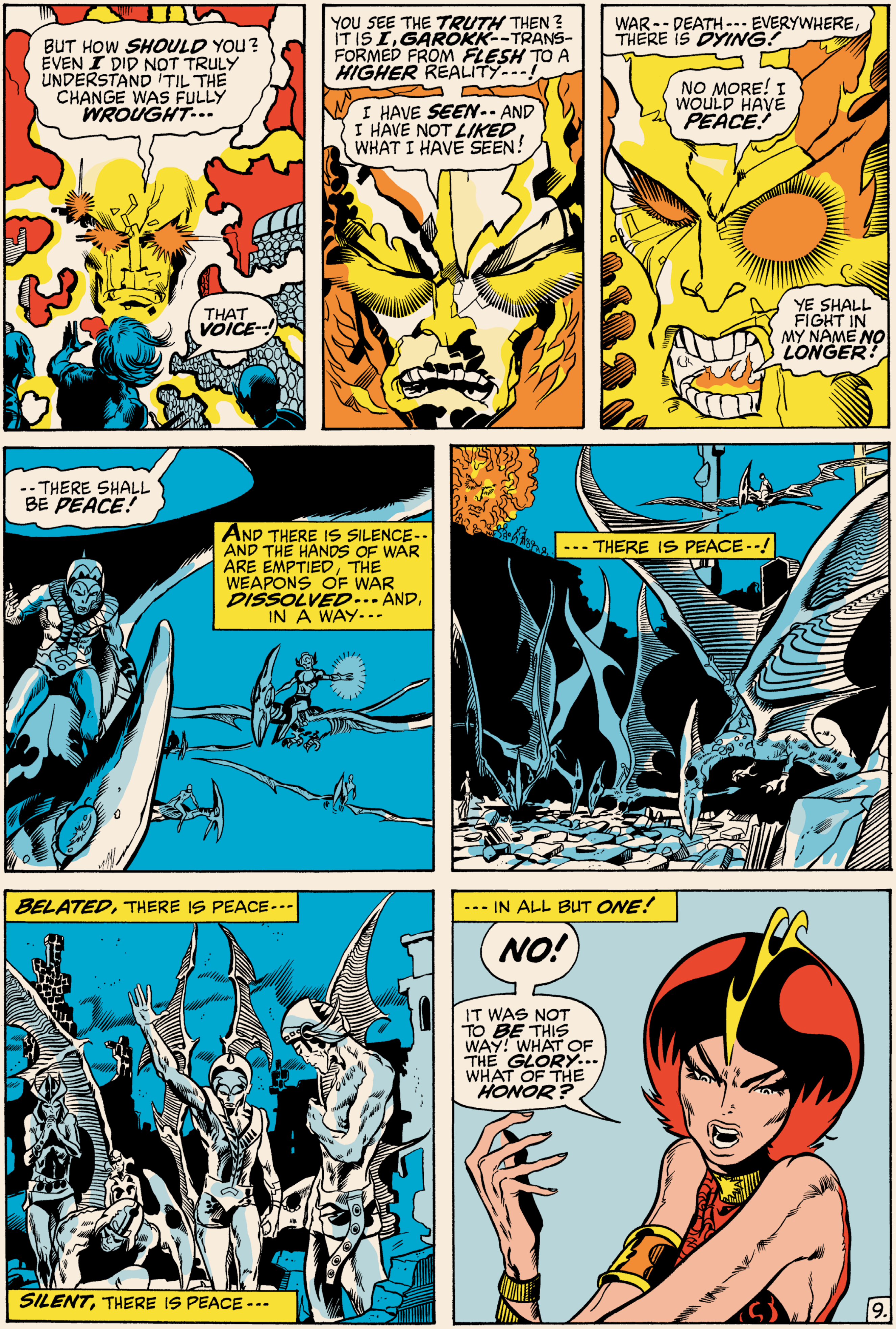

CLOUDING THE CITY WITH MADNESS, THE SKY-WARRIORS BLACKEN THE SKY WITH THEIR TORCH-BOMBS---AND, INDEED---THEY ARE EVERYWHERE...
---AND, EVERYWHERE, THERE IS DYING---
---AS THE MAD QUEEN GLOATS---
NONE SHALL ESCAPE ALIVE! LET THIS VALAKURI BE MADE AN EXAMPLE...
---A SACRIFICE!
IN THE NAME OF THE EVER-SACRED GAROKK---SUN GOD!
HOW DOES ONE MARK THE MOMENT OF REVERSAL? IS IT THAT INSTANT WHEN THINKING FAILS AND EMOTION RULES-- WHEN FATE WEAVES ITS BLIND WEB TO INCLUDE YET ANOTHER FOE-- ONE MADDENED KING OF THIS ANCIENT LAND--- KA-ZAR!
TWICE-CURSED QUEEN-- YOU GO TOO FAR!
ONCE THIS WAS A PEACEFUL LAND--- WITHOUT THE STRIFE OF WAR!
NOW YOU BLOODY OUR FIELDS--- OUR HOMES---
"AND FOR THAT YOU MUST PAY!"
BUT, IT IS THE PEOPLE WHO PAY IN ANY WAR---
---AS IT IS THE VALA KURI WHO PAY IN THIS!
DAVAIR-- DAVAIR, MY HUSBAND--!
---BUT THERE IS NO ANSWER--- NEVER AN ANSWER FROM THE DEAD--!
4

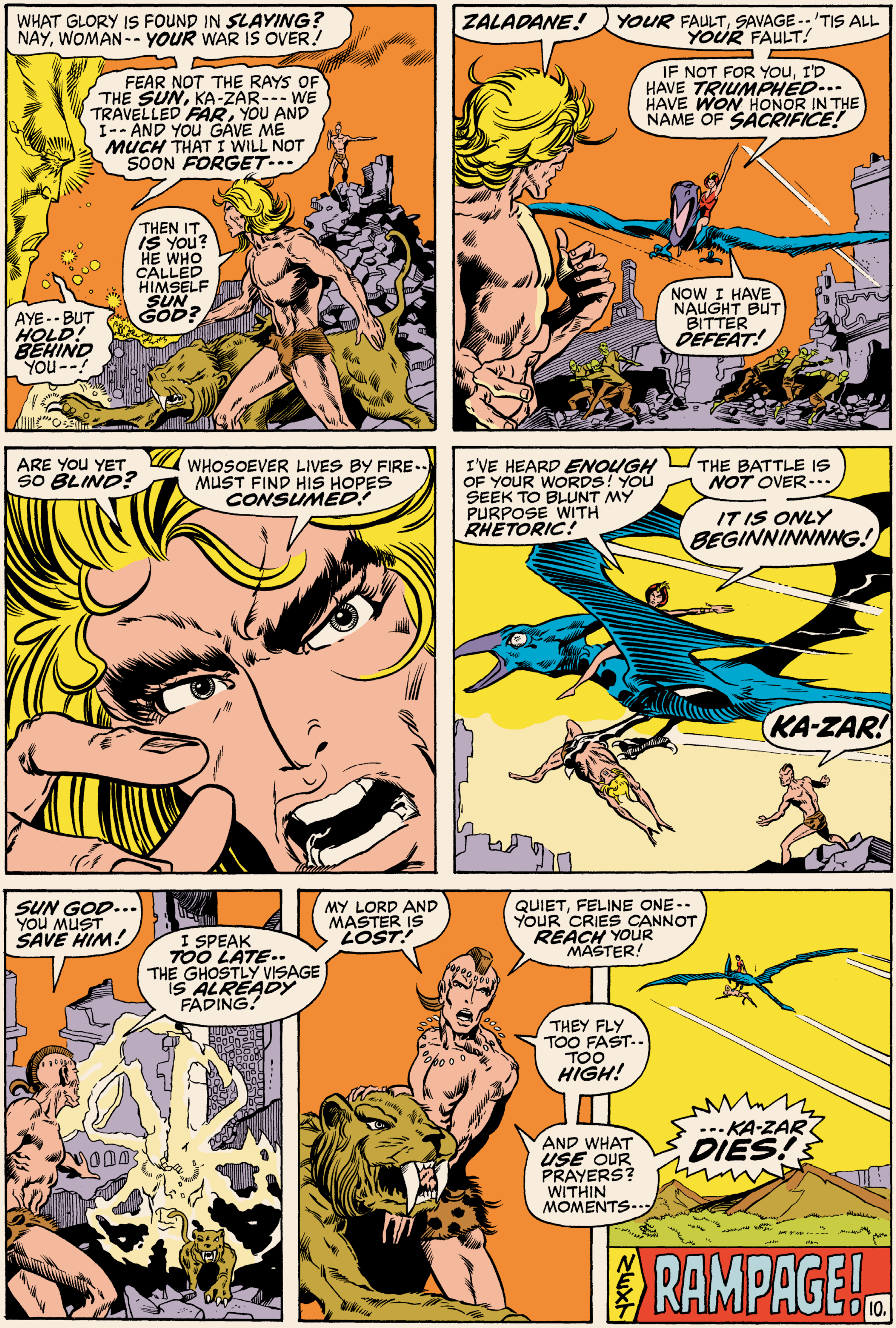

THERE IS SOUND---
---THERE IS FURY!
MY LORD KA-ZAR-- ARE WE SAVED?
Z-BOOM!
I CANNOT BRING YOU SALVATION---!
THAT YOU MUST WIN FOR YOURSELVES!
BUT WE CAN'T, MY LORD--- WE ARE A PEACEFUL RACE! WE HAVE NOT THE TOOLS OF WAR!
NAY-- YOU MUST BE OUR CHAMPION!
AND WHILE YOU AWAITED YOUR CHAMPION-- YOUR WOMEN DIED---
IS THIS PEACE-- OR SHEER FOLLY!
PLEASE, MY LORD---
YOU SAY YOU OWN NO WEAPONS--
--THEN INDEED A WEAPON MUST BE FOUND!
KA-ZAR--- LOOK TO THE SKY!
YET BEYOND THE STORM OF BATTLE, THERE RAGES SIBYLLINE CALM--- STILL, LIKE THE WHISPER OF FAINT MOONBEAMS PAINTING PALE GLADES BLUE---
AND IN THOSE SHADOWS OF NIGHTFALL, A GNARLED FIGURE MOVES---!
SILENT, MY BEATING HEART! THAT WHICH WE FEAR GROWS EVER NEARER---
THE MOMENT OF FATE APPROACHES-- THE TWISTED INSTANT OF DESTINY DRAWS CLOSER---
---EVER CLOSER!
LO, I TROD THESE PATHS FIVE HUNDRED YEARS ANON! HOW THE WINDS OF TIME HAVE SINCE RAVAGED MY ONCE HUMAN FORM!
OR WAS IT THE WINDS?
WAS IT NOT THE CURSE THAT BEFELL ME FOR DRINKING FROM YON STATUED VISAGE? THE CURSE THAT TURNS ME WITH EACH PASSING DAWN INTO A LIVING REPLICA---
--A WALKING DOPPELGANGER OF YONDER SUN GOD!
--AN IMMORTAL --WHO LONGS FOR THE SWEET RELEASE OF DEATH!
5

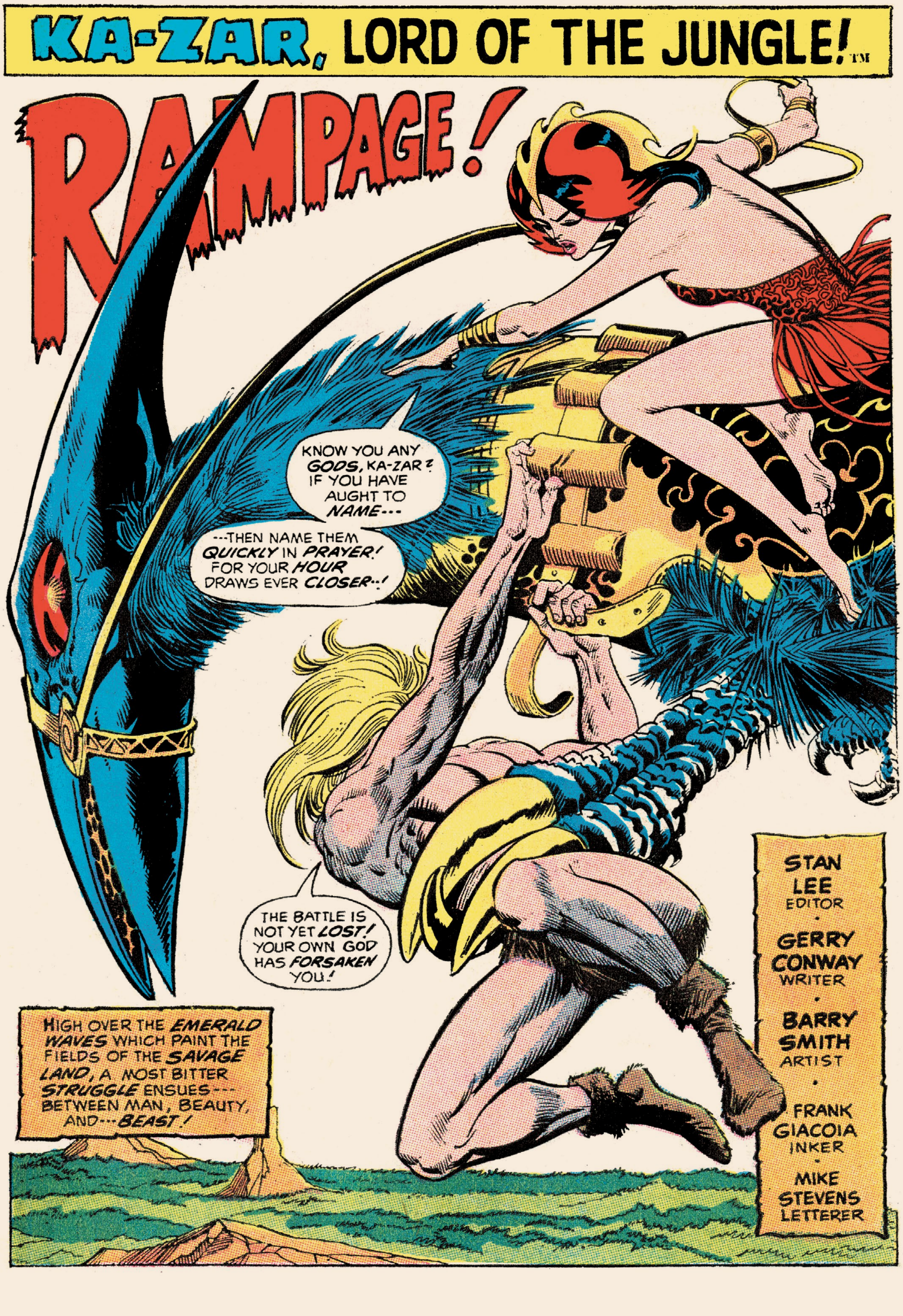

LET US LEAVE THE SOUL-TORN ANCIENT, AND ONCE AGAIN JOIN OUR BELEAGUERED KA-ZAR...
VILE ONE -- YOU'LL HAVE LITTLE USE OF YOUR FLESH-SINGEING WEAPON!
WHAT--?
FOR YOU THE FIGHT IS FINISHED, WARRIOR -- FOR YOU, AND SOON, FOR ALL YOUR KIND!
SOK!
AAAGH!
SO MUST IT END FOR THE FIGHTER -- EVER IN DEFEAT!
WHETHER IT BE VICTORY TODAY OR TOMORROW, VICTORY'S SPOILS ARE NO SOONER WON...
...THAN THEY ARE LOST!
STAY, ZABU! THE FLYING LIZARD CANNOT HARM US NOW!
IT IS PAST ITS PLACE AS THREAT...
THOMP!
..AS ARE ALL WHO LIVE BY SWORD!
COMPARE -- FIRE... AND TRANQUILITY! YET IN THE MOST PEACEFUL OF SCENES THERE MAY BURN CONFLICT...!
YOU! YOU TOOK MY MORTALITY, AND IN ITS PLACE, GAVE ME NOTHING BUT ANGUISH FOR MY RUINED SOUL!
IN ITS PLACE -- YOU GAVE ME YOUR LIKENESS...
AND WHAT IS THAT IF NOT A HOLLOW GIFT?
DEMON! I AM NOTHING -- I AM CURSED -- BY YOUR WILL! BY YOUR MOST PERFIDIOUS WILL!
6

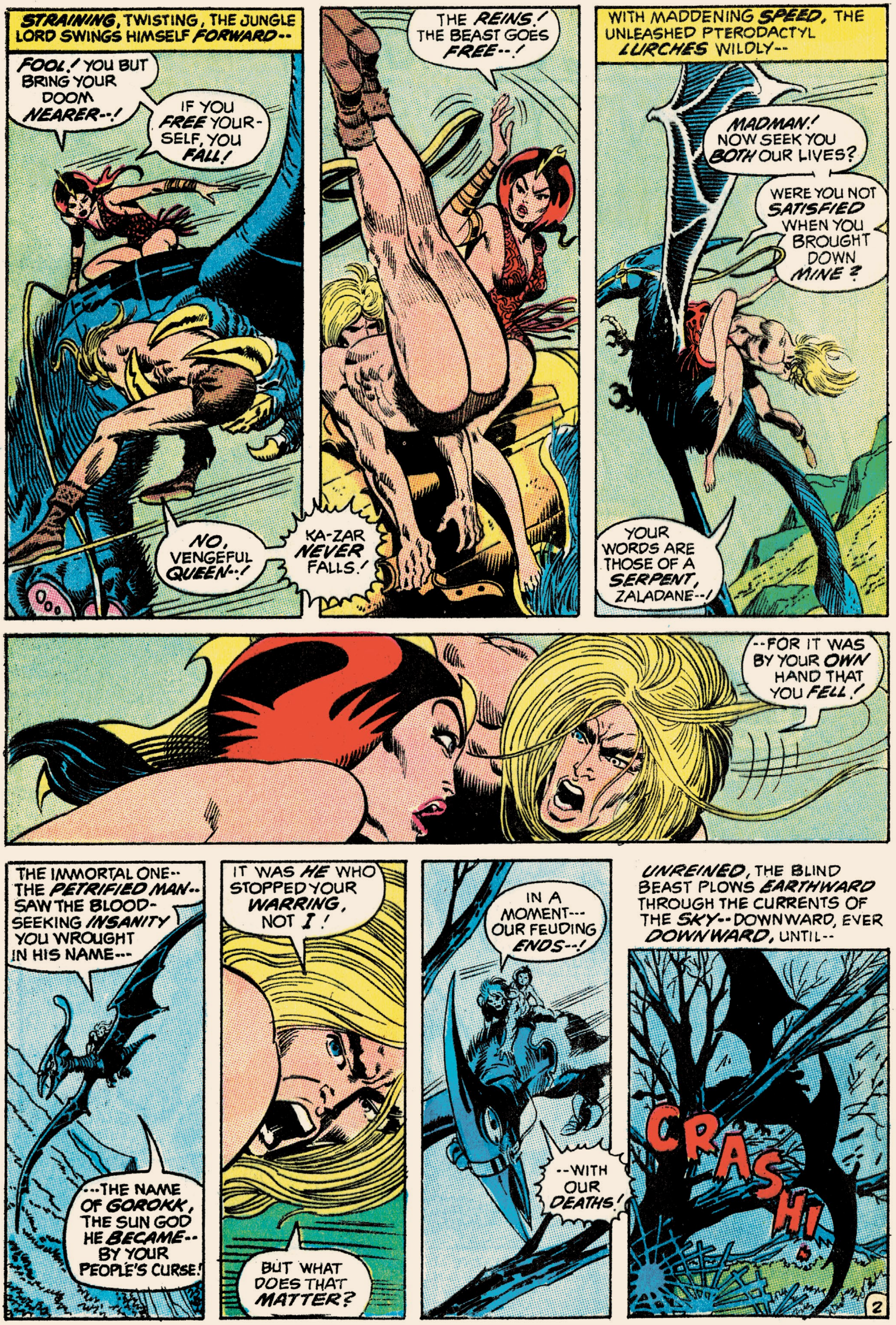

WAIT! HAVE YOU TAKEN MY SANITY IN RETURN FOR IMMORTALITY?
MY HAND--- WITH GREAT ISSUANCE OF FIRE--- PASSES INTO YON SOLID ROCK!
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?
MORE THAN MADNESS, IT WOULD SEEM---FOR SUCH ARE THE GAMES OF FATE---
---THAT IT IS WILLED BY DESTINY FOR ONE PONDEROUS TYRANNOSAURUS REX TO BE PRESENT AT THIS PENULTIMATE MOMENT---
A STEP--- A MOUNTAINSLIDE STEP TO SHAKE THE EARTH--- AND YET THE SUN GOD SEEMS DEAF---
---BUT ONLY FOR AN INSTANT...
---AS, SLOWLY, AS THOUGH BEARING THE WEIGHT OF HIS PENTAGRAMMED CENTURIES, HE TURNS---
ONCE I TREMBLED BEFORE YOUR FEARSOME GLARE---
--- BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED IN THIS TIMELESS LAND---
--- NOW 'TIS YOU, GREAT SAURIAN, WHO HAVE CAUSE TO FEAR---
AAAARRGH!!
---TO FEAR---
---THE POWER OF THE SUN GOD!
7.

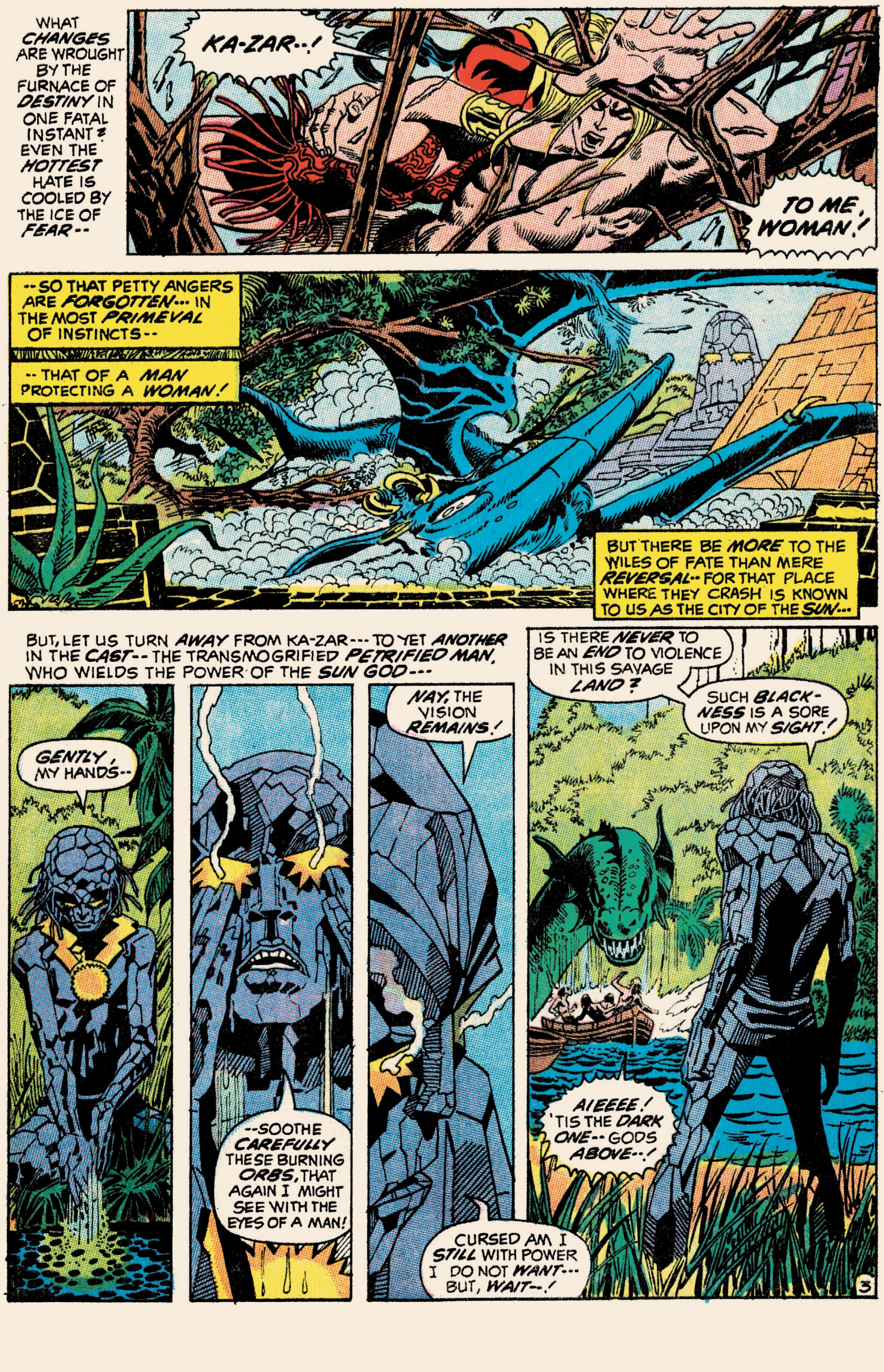

BUT SUCH IS THE STUFF OF MADNESS! TO SIMPLER THINGS -- TO WAR, AND KILLING --
--- TO THE PURSUIT OF DEATH ---
THEY TOLD ME YOU WERE GONE FROM OUR SAVAGE LAND -- BUT NO MATTER!
KA-ZAR!
I WOULD OFFER YOU AMNESTY FROM OUR FIRES -- IF YOU BUT PLEDGE YOURSELF TO MY CAUSE!
NEVER, WITCH! I'LL NOT MARCH UNDER THE BANNER OF MURDERERS!
THEN YOU SHALL LIE BURIED UNDER IT, BARBARIAN! IF YOUR SOUL NEEDS SOLACE FROM YOUR GOD ---
-- THEN SEEK IT NOW!
THIS DAY AND TOMORROW ARE OURS!
DEATH TO KA-ZAR!
BY A THOUSAND GODS -- NO!
NOT THIS DAY --- NOR THE NEXT!
WHO DARES??
I DARE, SUN QUEEN -- I, IN WHOSE VEINS RUNS PEASANT'S BLOOD...
I DARE, ZALADANE -- AS WILL I EVER DARE, 'TIL SUCH AS YOU RIDE THE CLOUDS NO MORE!
I DARE, QUEEN -- TONGAH OF THE FALL PEOPLE!
SUDDENLY, ALL WORDS ARE SWEPT AWAY ---!
ENOUGH! I HAVE WITNESSED ENOUGH!
THERE SHALL BE AN END TO KILLING!
TRICKERY! KA-ZAR -- THIS IS YOUR DOING!
NO, WOMAN -- I KNOW NOTHING OF IT!
8

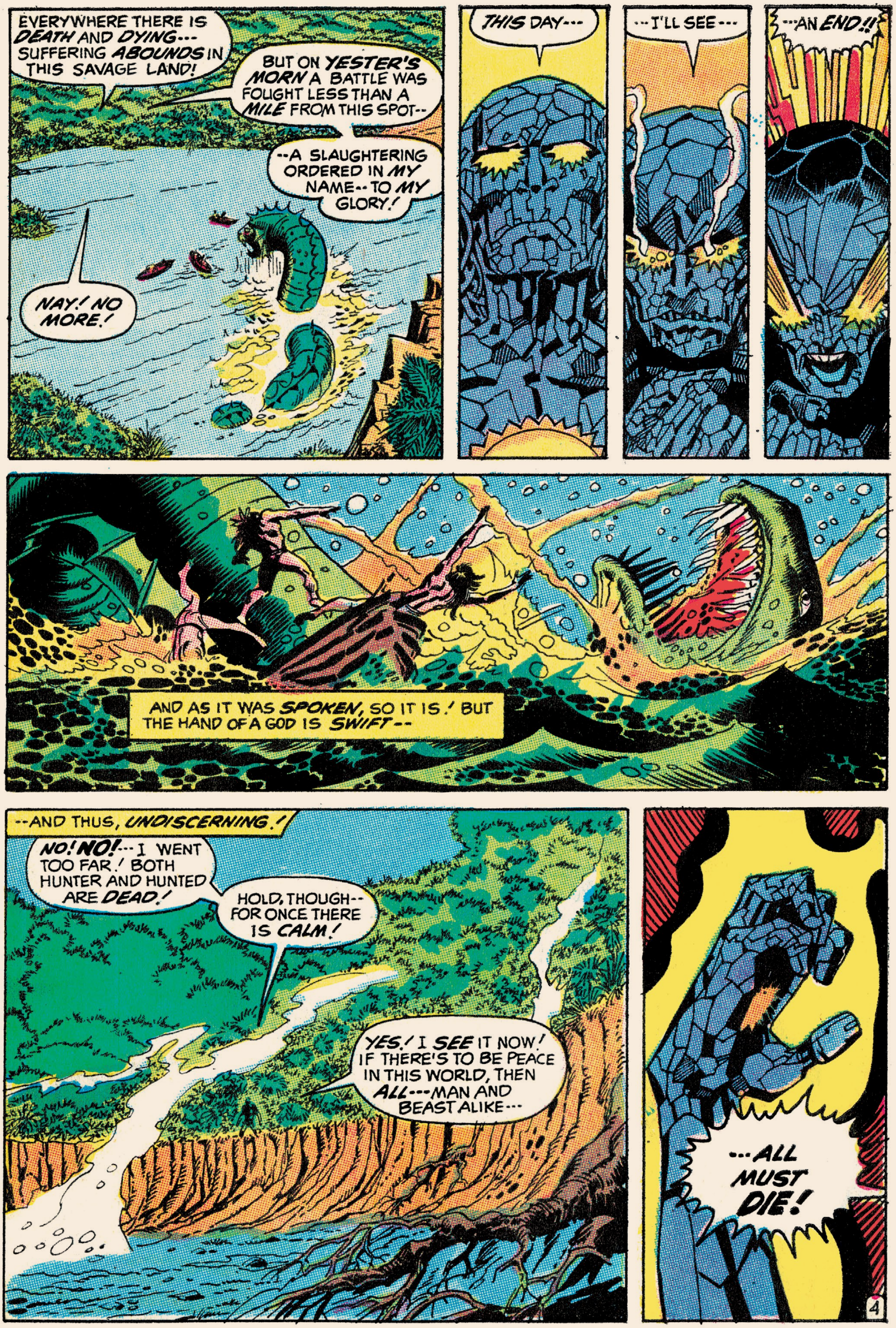

BUT HOW **SHOULD** YOU? EVEN **I** DID NOT TRULY UNDERSTAND 'TIL THE CHANGE WAS FULLY **WROUGHT**---
THAT **VOICE**--!
YOU SEE THE **TRUTH** THEN? IT IS **I, GAROKK**--TRANSFORMED FROM **FLESH** TO A **HIGHER** REALITY---!
I HAVE **SEEN**-- AND I HAVE NOT **LIKED** WHAT I HAVE SEEN!
WAR-- DEATH--- EVERYWHERE, THERE IS **DYING!**
NO MORE! I WOULD HAVE **PEACE!**
YE SHALL FIGHT IN MY NAME **NO LONGER!**
--THERE SHALL BE **PEACE!**
AND THERE IS SILENCE-- AND THE HANDS OF WAR ARE EMPTIED, THE WEAPONS OF WAR **DISSOLVED**--- AND, IN A WAY---
--- THERE IS PEACE--!
BELATED, THERE IS PEACE---
SILENT, THERE IS PEACE---
--- IN ALL BUT **ONE!**
NO!
IT WAS NOT TO **BE** THIS WAY! WHAT OF THE **GLORY**--- WHAT OF THE **HONOR?**
9.

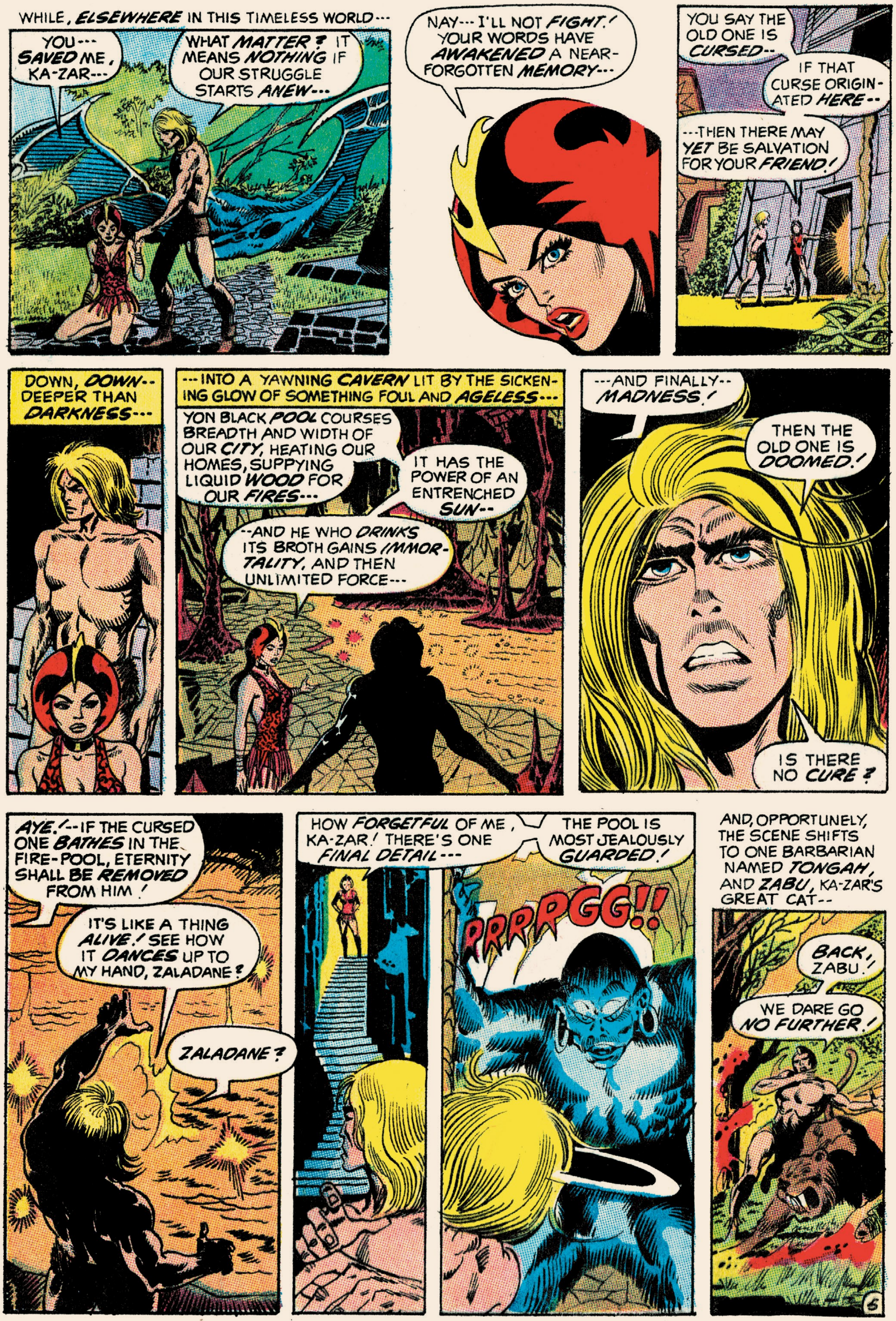

WHAT GLORY IS FOUND IN SLAYING? NAY, WOMAN-- YOUR WAR IS OVER!
FEAR NOT THE RAYS OF THE SUN, KA-ZAR--- WE TRAVELLED FAR, YOU AND I-- AND YOU GAVE ME MUCH THAT I WILL NOT SOON FORGET---
THEN IT IS YOU? HE WHO CALLED HIMSELF SUN GOD?
AYE-- BUT HOLD! BEHIND YOU--!
ZALADANE!
YOUR FAULT, SAVAGE-- 'TIS ALL YOUR FAULT!
IF NOT FOR YOU, I'D HAVE TRIUMPHED--- HAVE WON HONOR IN THE NAME OF SACRIFICE!
NOW I HAVE NAUGHT BUT BITTER DEFEAT!
ARE YOU YET SO BLIND?
WHOSOEVER LIVES BY FIRE-- MUST FIND HIS HOPES CONSUMED!
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH OF YOUR WORDS! YOU SEEK TO BLUNT MY PURPOSE WITH RHETORIC!
THE BATTLE IS NOT OVER---
IT IS ONLY BEGINNINNNNG!
KA-ZAR!
SUN GOD--- YOU MUST SAVE HIM!
I SPEAK TOO LATE-- THE GHOSTLY VISAGE IS ALREADY FADING!
MY LORD AND MASTER IS LOST!
QUIET, FELINE ONE-- YOUR CRIES CANNOT REACH YOUR MASTER!
THEY FLY TOO FAST-- TOO HIGH!
AND WHAT USE OUR PRAYERS? WITHIN MOMENTS---
---KA-ZAR DIES!
NEXT
RAMPAGE!
10.

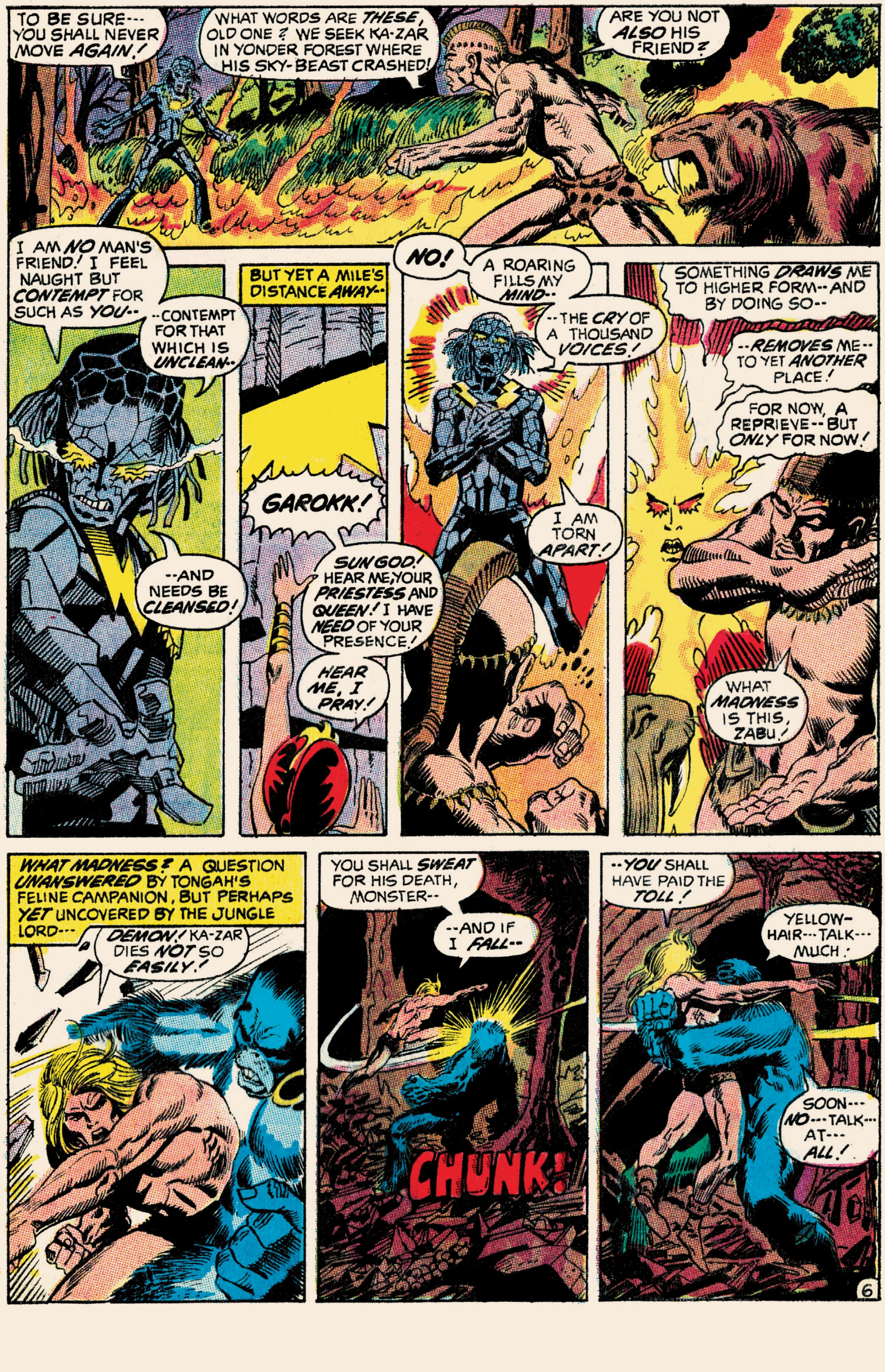

KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE JUNGLE!™
RAMPAGE!
KNOW YOU ANY GODS, KA-ZAR? IF YOU HAVE AUGHT TO NAME---
---THEN NAME THEM QUICKLY IN PRAYER! FOR YOUR HOUR DRAWS EVER CLOSER--!
THE BATTLE IS NOT YET LOST! YOUR OWN GOD HAS FORSAKEN YOU!
HIGH OVER THE EMERALD WAVES WHICH PAINT THE FIELDS OF THE SAVAGE LAND, A MOST BITTER STRUGGLE ENSUES-- BETWEEN MAN, BEAUTY, AND---BEAST!
STAN LEE EDITOR
GERRY CONWAY WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
FRANK GIACOIA INKER
MIKE STEVENS LETTERER

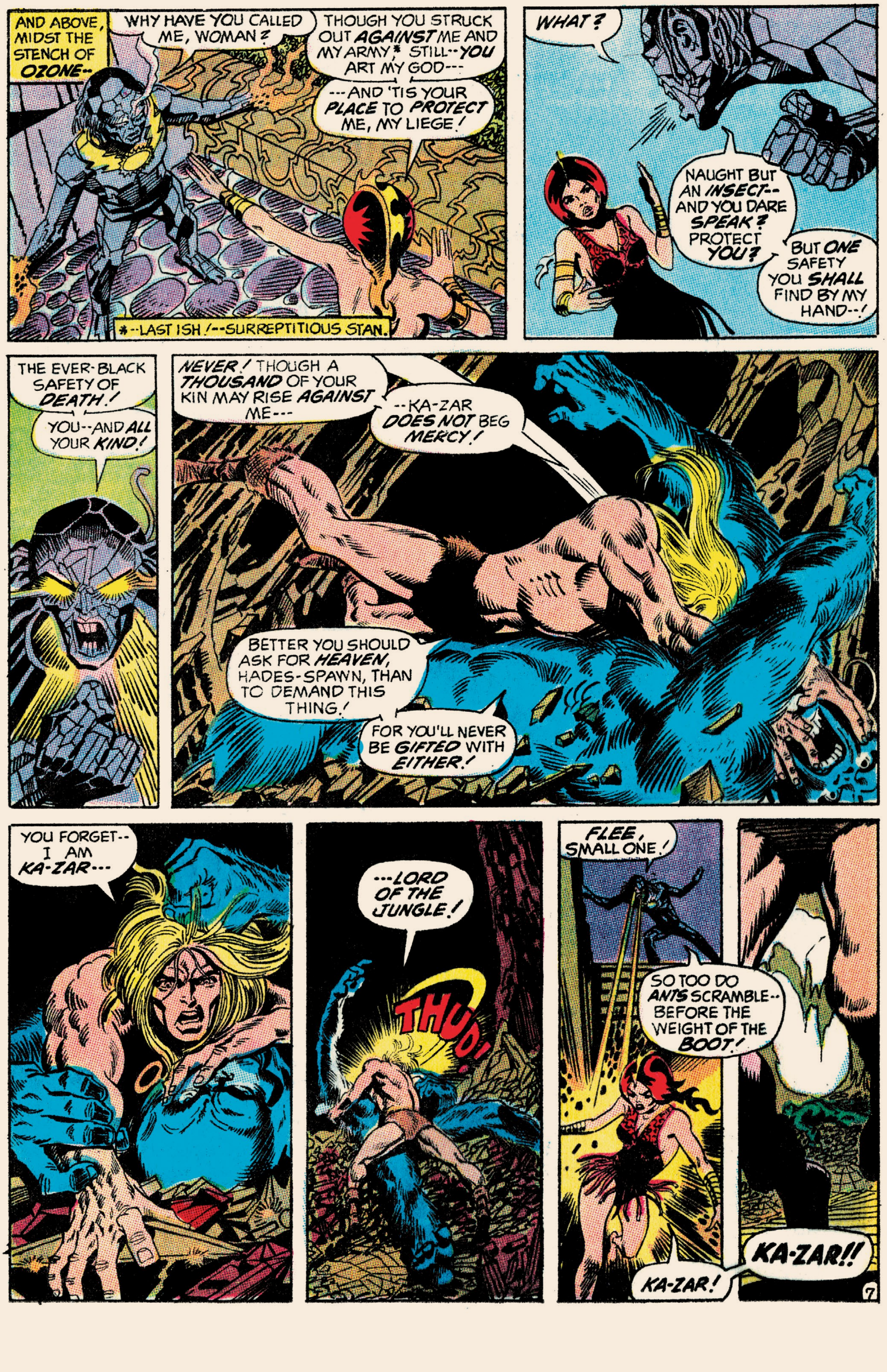

STRAINING, TWISTING, THE JUNGLE LORD SWINGS HIMSELF FORWARD--
FOOL! YOU BUT BRING YOUR DOOM NEARER--!
IF YOU FREE YOURSELF, YOU FALL!
NO, VENGEFUL QUEEN--!
KA-ZAR NEVER FALLS!
THE REINS! THE BEAST GOES FREE--!
WITH MADDENING SPEED, THE UNLEASHED PTERODACTYL LURCHES WILDLY--
MADMAN! NOW SEEK YOU BOTH OUR LIVES?
WERE YOU NOT SATISFIED WHEN YOU BROUGHT DOWN MINE?
YOUR WORDS ARE THOSE OF A SERPENT, ZALADANE--!
--FOR IT WAS BY YOUR OWN HAND THAT YOU FELL!
THE IMMORTAL ONE-- THE PETRIFIED MAN-- SAW THE BLOOD-SEEKING INSANITY YOU WROUGHT IN HIS NAME---
---THE NAME OF GOROKK, THE SUN GOD HE BECAME-- BY YOUR PEOPLE'S CURSE!
IT WAS HE WHO STOPPED YOUR WARRING, NOT I!
BUT WHAT DOES THAT MATTER?
IN A MOMENT--- OUR FEUDING ENDS--!
--WITH OUR DEATHS!
UNREINED, THE BLIND BEAST PLOWS EARTHWARD THROUGH THE CURRENTS OF THE SKY-- DOWNWARD, EVER DOWNWARD, UNTIL--
CRASH!
2

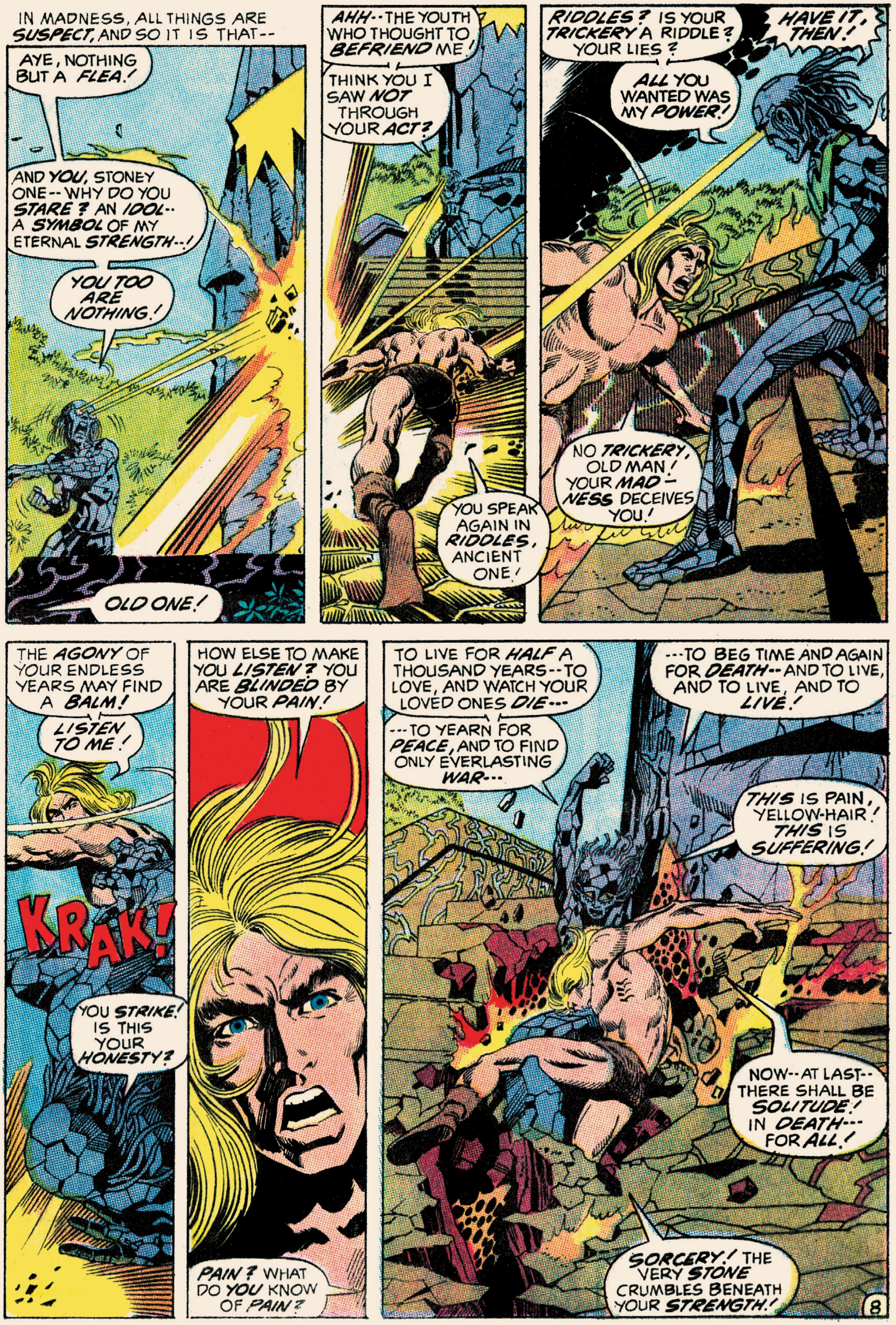

WHAT CHANGES ARE WROUGHT BY THE FURNACE OF DESTINY IN ONE FATAL INSTANT? EVEN THE HOTTEST HATE IS COOLED BY THE ICE OF FEAR--
KA-ZAR--!
TO ME, WOMAN!
--SO THAT PETTY ANGERS ARE FORGOTTEN--- IN THE MOST PRIMEVAL OF INSTINCTS--
--THAT OF A MAN PROTECTING A WOMAN!
BUT THERE BE MORE TO THE WILES OF FATE THAN MERE REVERSAL-- FOR THAT PLACE WHERE THEY CRASH IS KNOWN TO US AS THE CITY OF THE SUN---
BUT, LET US TURN AWAY FROM KA-ZAR--- TO YET ANOTHER IN THE CAST-- THE TRANSMOGRIFIED PETRIFIED MAN, WHO WIELDS THE POWER OF THE SUN GOD---
GENTLY, MY HANDS--
--SOOTHE CAREFULLY THESE BURNING ORBS, THAT AGAIN I MIGHT SEE WITH THE EYES OF A MAN!
NAY, THE VISION REMAINS!
CURSED AM I STILL WITH POWER I DO NOT WANT--- BUT, WAIT--!
IS THERE NEVER TO BE AN END TO VIOLENCE IN THIS SAVAGE LAND?
SUCH BLACKNESS IS A SORE UPON MY SIGHT!
AIEEEE! 'TIS THE DARK ONE-- GODS ABOVE--!
3

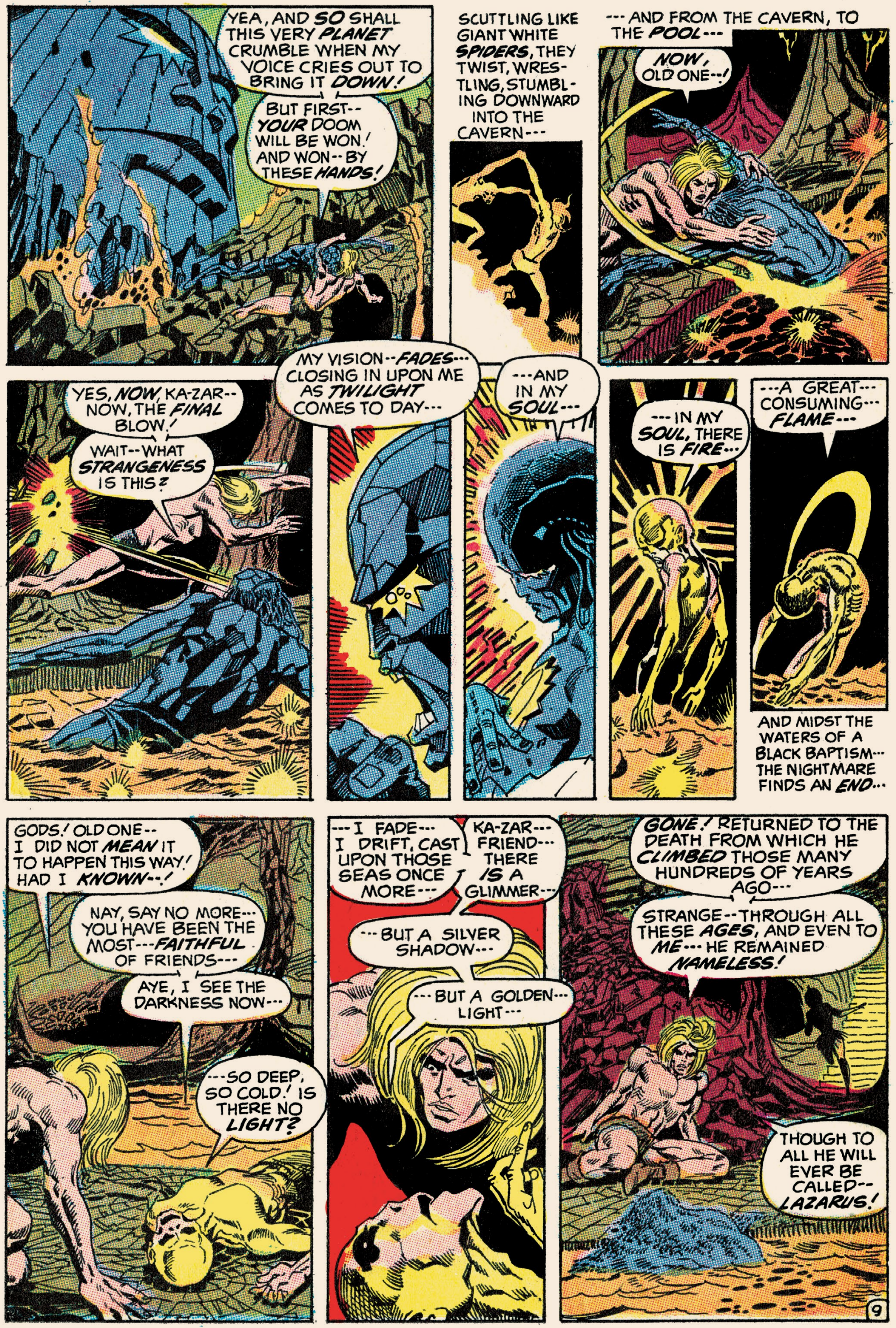

EVERYWHERE THERE IS DEATH AND DYING--- SUFFERING ABOUNDS IN THIS SAVAGE LAND!
BUT ON YESTER'S MORN A BATTLE WAS FOUGHT LESS THAN A MILE FROM THIS SPOT--
--A SLAUGHTERING ORDERED IN MY NAME--TO MY GLORY!
NAY! NO MORE!
THIS DAY---
---I'LL SEE---
---AN END!!
AND AS IT WAS SPOKEN, SO IT IS! BUT THE HAND OF A GOD IS SWIFT--
--AND THUS, UNDISCERNING!
NO! NO!--- I WENT TOO FAR! BOTH HUNTER AND HUNTED ARE DEAD!
HOLD, THOUGH-- FOR ONCE THERE IS CALM!
YES! I SEE IT NOW! IF THERE'S TO BE PEACE IN THIS WORLD, THEN ALL---MAN AND BEAST ALIKE---
---ALL MUST DIE!
4

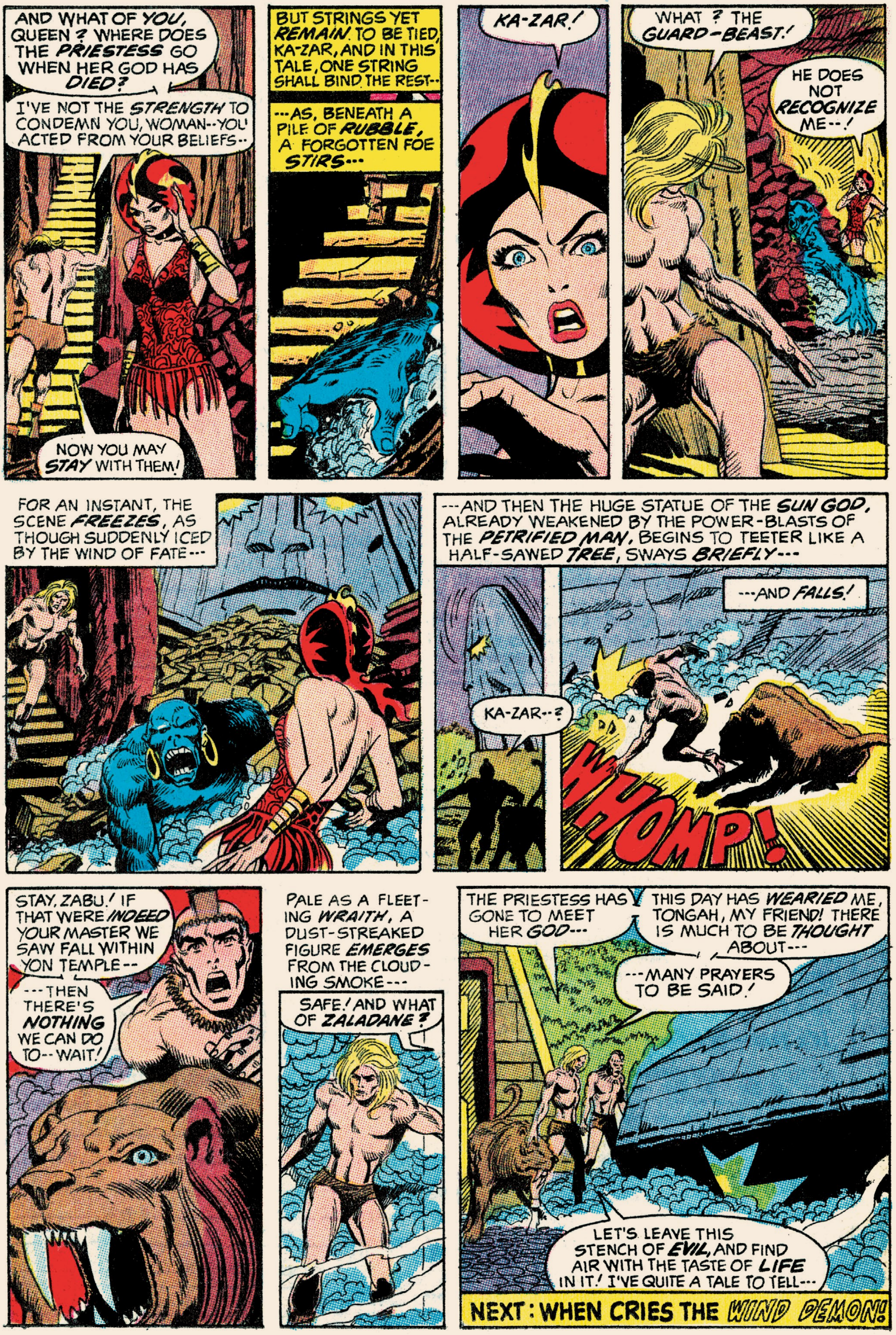

WHILE, ELSEWHERE IN THIS TIMELESS WORLD---
YOU--- SAVED ME, KA-ZAR---
WHAT MATTER? IT MEANS NOTHING IF OUR STRUGGLE STARTS ANEW---
NAY--- I'LL NOT FIGHT! YOUR WORDS HAVE AWAKENED A NEAR-FORGOTTEN MEMORY---
YOU SAY THE OLD ONE IS CURSED--
IF THAT CURSE ORIGINATED HERE--
--THEN THERE MAY YET BE SALVATION FOR YOUR FRIEND!
DOWN, DOWN-- DEEPER THAN DARKNESS---
---INTO A YAWNING CAVERN LIT BY THE SICKENING GLOW OF SOMETHING FOUL AND AGELESS---
YON BLACK POOL COURSES BREADTH AND WIDTH OF OUR CITY, HEATING OUR HOMES, SUPPYING LIQUID WOOD FOR OUR FIRES---
IT HAS THE POWER OF AN ENTRENCHED SUN--
--AND HE WHO DRINKS ITS BROTH GAINS IMMORTALITY, AND THEN UNLIMITED FORCE---
---AND FINALLY-- MADNESS!
THEN THE OLD ONE IS DOOMED!
IS THERE NO CURE?
AYE!--IF THE CURSED ONE BATHES IN THE FIRE-POOL, ETERNITY SHALL BE REMOVED FROM HIM!
IT'S LIKE A THING ALIVE! SEE HOW IT DANCES UP TO MY HAND, ZALADANE?
ZALADANE?
HOW FORGETFUL OF ME, KA-ZAR! THERE'S ONE FINAL DETAIL---
THE POOL IS MOST JEALOUSLY GUARDED!
RRRRGG!!
AND, OPPORTUNELY, THE SCENE SHIFTS TO ONE BARBARIAN NAMED TONGAH, AND ZABU, KA-ZAR'S GREAT CAT--
BACK, ZABU!
WE DARE GO NO FURTHER!
6


TO BE SURE--- YOU SHALL NEVER MOVE *AGAIN*!
WHAT WORDS ARE *THESE*, OLD ONE? WE SEEK KA-ZAR IN YONDER FOREST WHERE HIS SKY-BEAST CRASHED!
ARE YOU NOT *ALSO* HIS FRIEND?
I AM *NO* MAN'S FRIEND! I FEEL NAUGHT BUT *CONTEMPT* FOR SUCH AS *YOU*--
--CONTEMPT FOR THAT WHICH IS *UNCLEAN*--
--AND NEEDS BE *CLEANSED*!
BUT YET A MILE'S DISTANCE *AWAY*--
GAROKK!
SUN GOD! HEAR ME, YOUR *PRIESTESS* AND *QUEEN*! I HAVE *NEED* OF YOUR PRESENCE!
HEAR ME, I PRAY!
NO!
A ROARING FILLS MY *MIND*--
--THE *CRY* OF A THOUSAND *VOICES*!
I AM TORN *APART*!
SOMETHING *DRAWS* ME TO HIGHER FORM--AND BY DOING SO--
--*REMOVES* ME--TO YET *ANOTHER* PLACE!
FOR NOW, A REPRIEVE--BUT *ONLY* FOR NOW!
WHAT *MADNESS* IS THIS, ZABU!
WHAT MADNESS? A QUESTION *UNANSWERED* BY TONGAH'S FELINE CAMPANION, BUT PERHAPS *YET* UNCOVERED BY THE JUNGLE LORD---
DEMON! KA-ZAR DIES *NOT* SO *EASILY*!
YOU SHALL *SWEAT* FOR HIS DEATH, MONSTER--
--AND IF I *FALL*--
CHUNK!
--*YOU* SHALL HAVE PAID THE *TOLL*!
YELLOW-HAIR---TALK---MUCH.
SOON--- *NO*---TALK--- AT--- *ALL*!
6

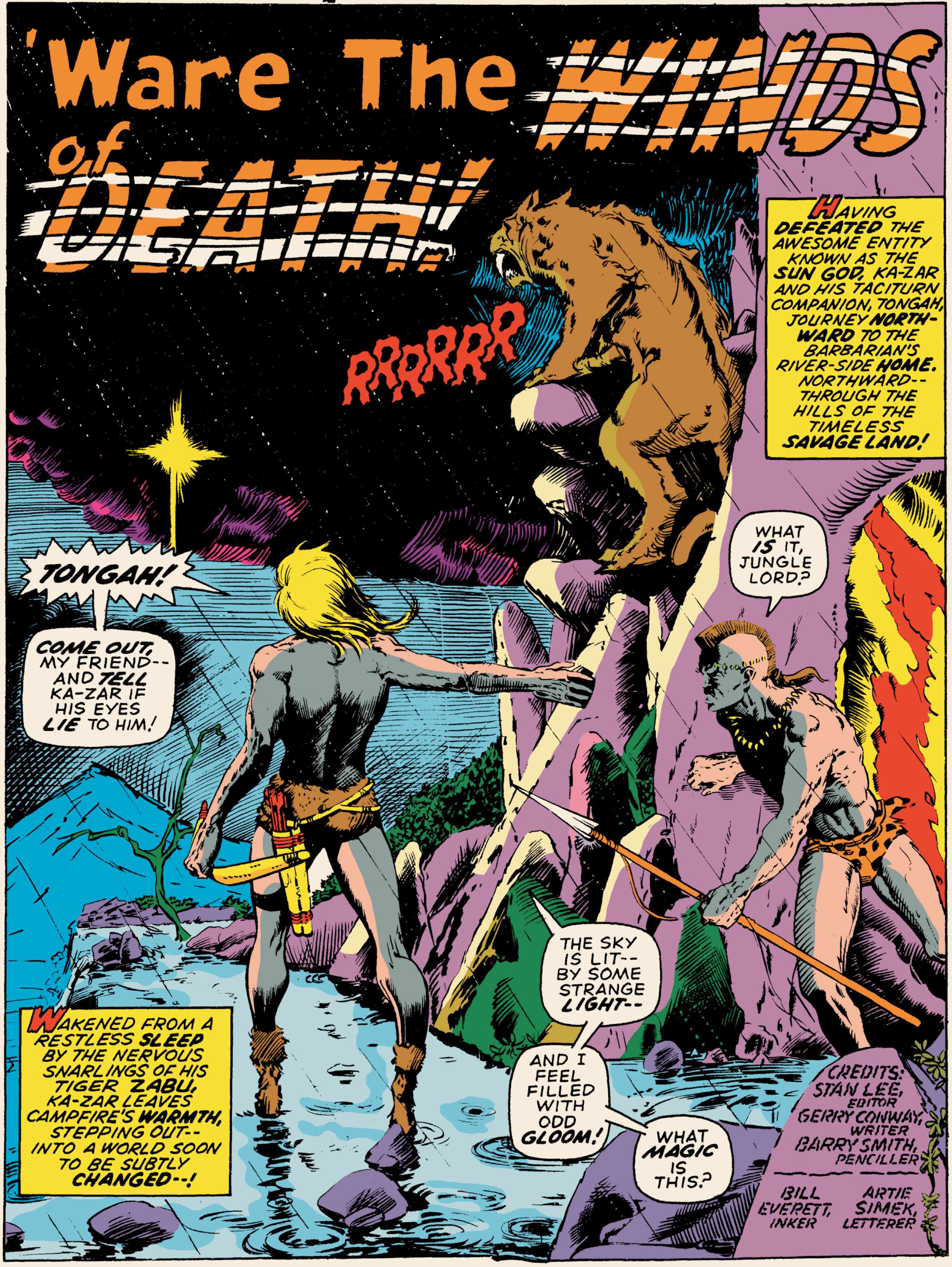

AND ABOVE, MIDST THE STENCH OF OZONE--
WHY HAVE YOU CALLED ME, WOMAN?
THOUGH YOU STRUCK OUT AGAINST ME AND MY ARMY* STILL--YOU ART MY GOD---
---AND 'TIS YOUR PLACE TO PROTECT ME, MY LIEGE!
*--LAST ISH!--SURREPTITIOUS STAN.
WHAT?
NAUGHT BUT AN INSECT--AND YOU DARE SPEAK? PROTECT YOU?
BUT ONE SAFETY YOU SHALL FIND BY MY HAND--!
THE EVER-BLACK SAFETY OF DEATH!
YOU--AND ALL YOUR KIND!
NEVER! THOUGH A THOUSAND OF YOUR KIN MAY RISE AGAINST ME---
--KA-ZAR DOES NOT BEG MERCY!
BETTER YOU SHOULD ASK FOR HEAVEN, HADES-SPAWN, THAN TO DEMAND THIS THING!
FOR YOU'LL NEVER BE GIFTED WITH EITHER!
YOU FORGET--I AM KA-ZAR---
---LORD OF THE JUNGLE!
THUD!
FLEE, SMALL ONE!
SO TOO DO ANTS SCRAMBLE--BEFORE THE WEIGHT OF THE BOOT!
KA-ZAR!
KA-ZAR!!
7

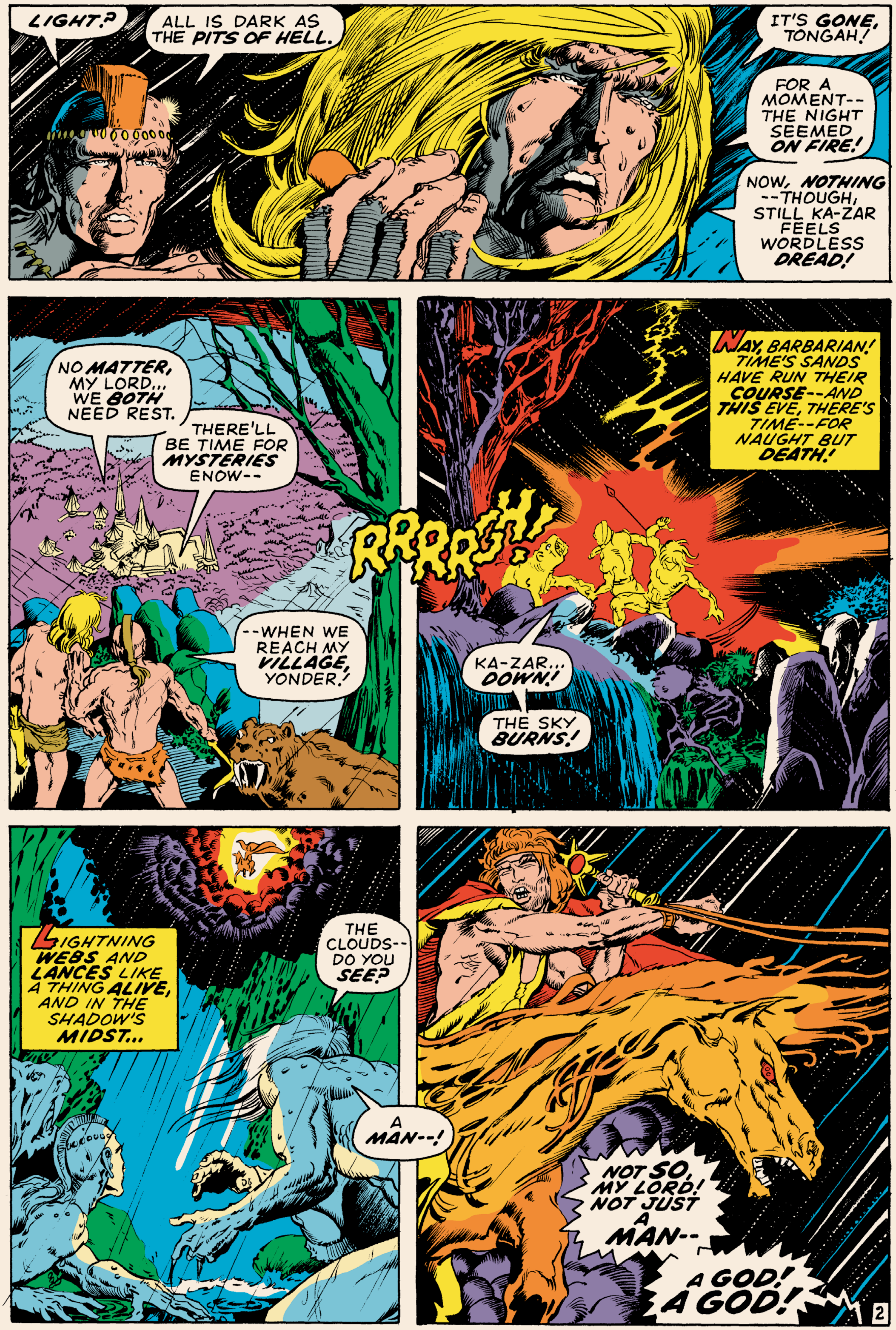

IN MADNESS, ALL THINGS ARE SUSPECT, AND SO IT IS THAT--
AYE, NOTHING BUT A FLEA!
AND YOU, STONEY ONE--WHY DO YOU STARE? AN IDOL--A SYMBOL OF MY ETERNAL STRENGTH--!
YOU TOO ARE NOTHING!
OLD ONE!
AHH--THE YOUTH WHO THOUGHT TO BEFRIEND ME!
THINK YOU I SAW NOT THROUGH YOUR ACT?
YOU SPEAK AGAIN IN RIDDLES, ANCIENT ONE!
RIDDLES? IS YOUR TRICKERY A RIDDLE? YOUR LIES?
ALL YOU WANTED WAS MY POWER!
HAVE IT, THEN!
NO TRICKERY, OLD MAN! YOUR MADNESS DECEIVES YOU!
THE AGONY OF YOUR ENDLESS YEARS MAY FIND A BALM!
LISTEN TO ME!
KRAK!
YOU STRIKE! IS THIS YOUR HONESTY?
HOW ELSE TO MAKE YOU LISTEN? YOU ARE BLINDED BY YOUR PAIN!
PAIN? WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF PAIN?
TO LIVE FOR HALF A THOUSAND YEARS--TO LOVE, AND WATCH YOUR LOVED ONES DIE---
---TO YEARN FOR PEACE, AND TO FIND ONLY EVERLASTING WAR---
---TO BEG TIME AND AGAIN FOR DEATH--AND TO LIVE, AND TO LIVE, AND TO LIVE!
THIS IS PAIN, YELLOW-HAIR! THIS IS SUFFERING!
NOW--AT LAST--THERE SHALL BE SOLITUDE! IN DEATH---FOR ALL!
SORCERY! THE VERY STONE CRUMBLES BENEATH YOUR STRENGTH!
8

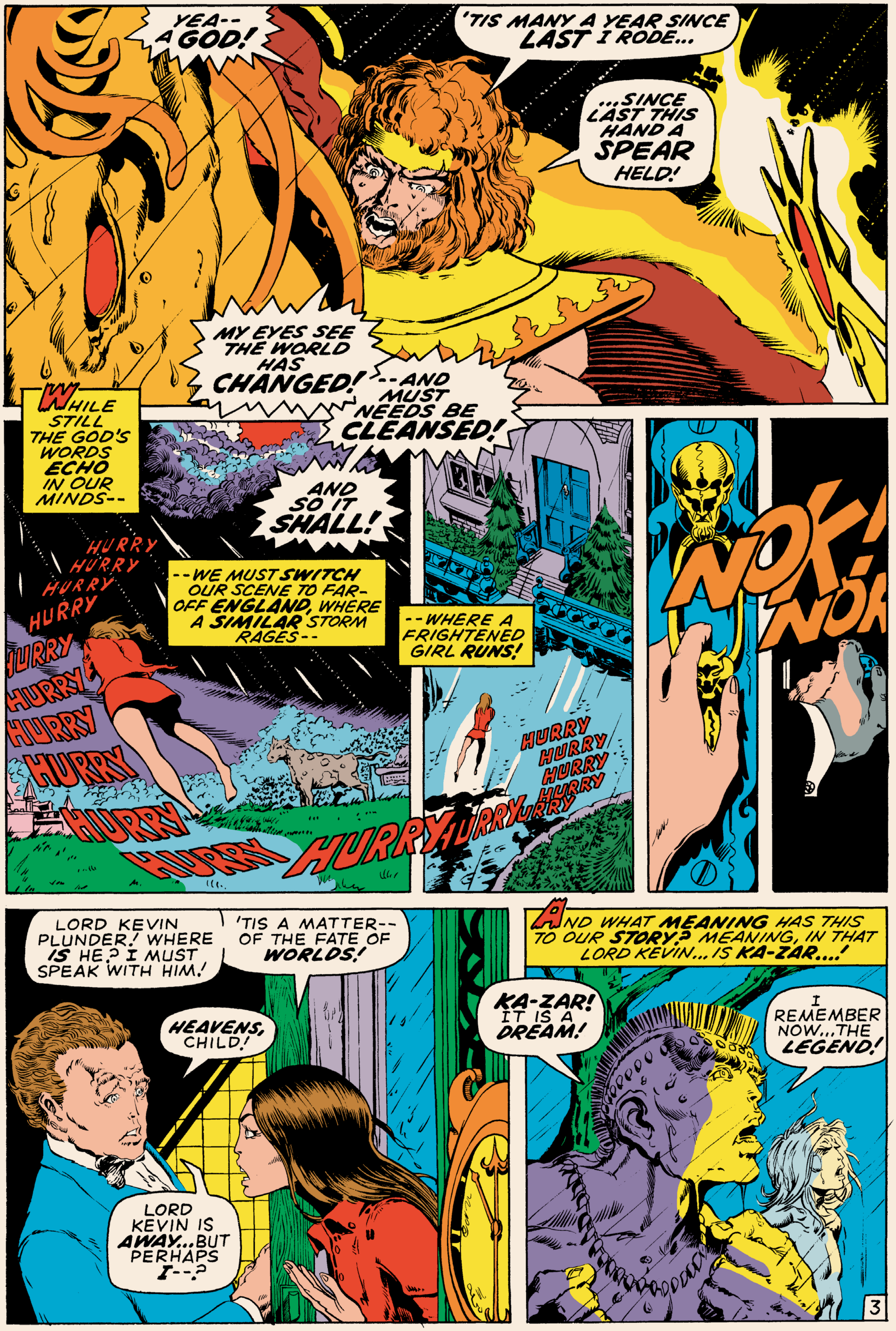

YEA, AND SO SHALL THIS VERY PLANET CRUMBLE WHEN MY VOICE CRIES OUT TO BRING IT DOWN!
BUT FIRST-- YOUR DOOM WILL BE WON! AND WON-- BY THESE HANDS!
SCUTTLING LIKE GIANT WHITE SPIDERS, THEY TWIST, WRESTLING, STUMBLING DOWNWARD INTO THE CAVERN---
--- AND FROM THE CAVERN, TO THE POOL---
NOW, OLD ONE--!
YES, NOW, KA-ZAR-- NOW, THE FINAL BLOW!
WAIT-- WHAT STRANGENESS IS THIS?
MY VISION--FADES--- CLOSING IN UPON ME AS TWILIGHT COMES TO DAY---
---AND IN MY SOUL---
---IN MY SOUL, THERE IS FIRE---
---A GREAT--- CONSUMING--- FLAME---
AND MIDST THE WATERS OF A BLACK BAPTISM--- THE NIGHTMARE FINDS AN END...
GODS! OLD ONE-- I DID NOT MEAN IT TO HAPPEN THIS WAY! HAD I KNOWN--!
NAY, SAY NO MORE--- YOU HAVE BEEN THE MOST---FAITHFUL OF FRIENDS---
AYE, I SEE THE DARKNESS NOW---
---SO DEEP, SO COLD! IS THERE NO LIGHT?
---I FADE--- I DRIFT, CAST UPON THOSE SEAS ONCE MORE---
KA-ZAR--- FRIEND--- THERE IS A GLIMMER---
---BUT A SILVER SHADOW---
---BUT A GOLDEN--- LIGHT---
GONE! RETURNED TO THE DEATH FROM WHICH HE CLIMBED THOSE MANY HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO---
STRANGE--THROUGH ALL THESE AGES, AND EVEN TO ME--- HE REMAINED NAMELESS!
THOUGH TO ALL HE WILL EVER BE CALLED-- LAZARUS!
9

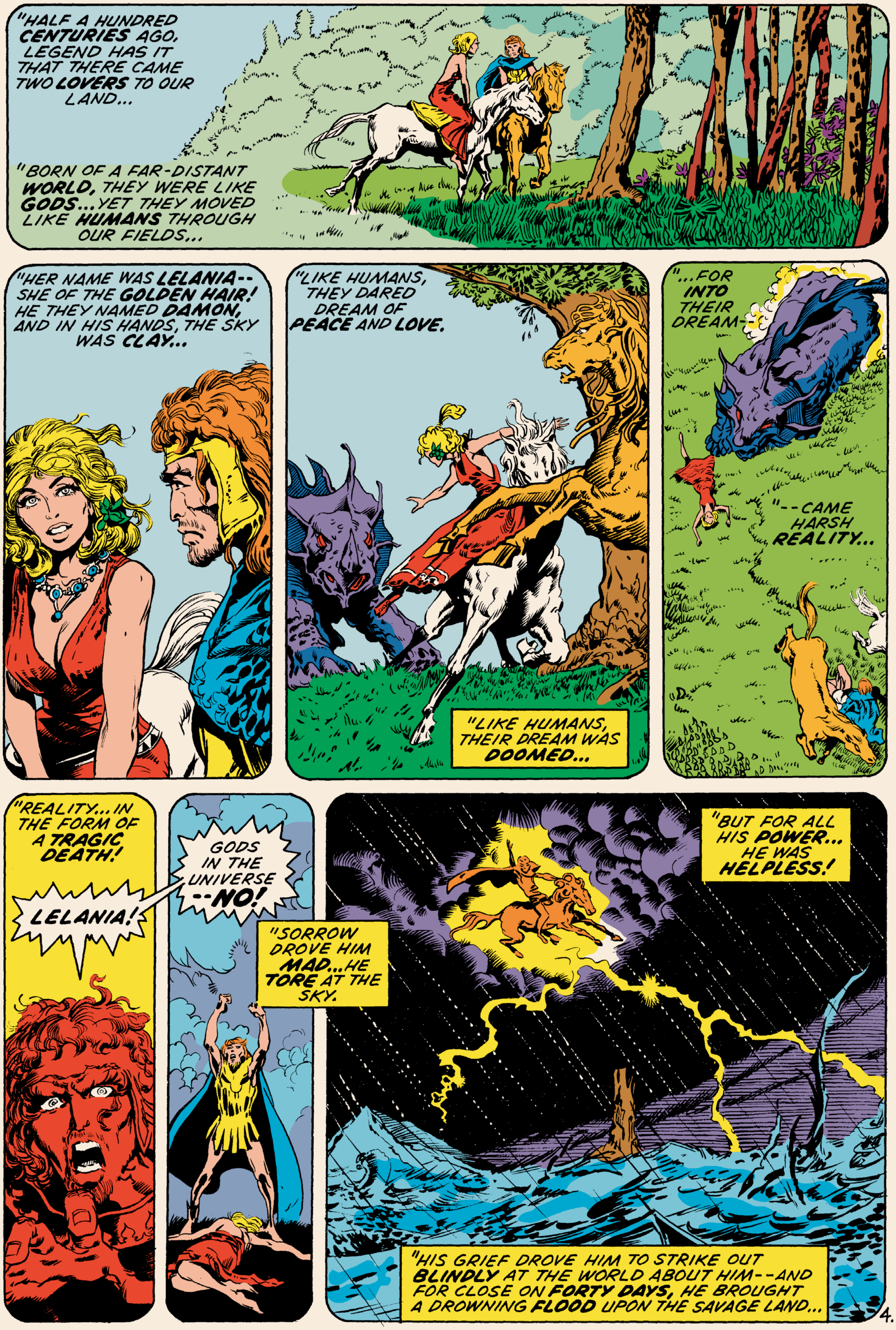

AND WHAT OF YOU, QUEEN ? WHERE DOES THE PRIESTESS GO WHEN HER GOD HAS DIED?
I'VE NOT THE STRENGTH TO CONDEMN YOU, WOMAN--YOU ACTED FROM YOUR BELIEFS--
NOW YOU MAY STAY WITH THEM!
BUT STRINGS YET REMAIN TO BE TIED, KA-ZAR, AND IN THIS TALE, ONE STRING SHALL BIND THE REST--
--AS, BENEATH A PILE OF RUBBLE, A FORGOTTEN FOE STIRS---
KA-ZAR!
WHAT ? THE GUARD-BEAST!
HE DOES NOT RECOGNIZE ME--!
FOR AN INSTANT, THE SCENE FREEZES, AS THOUGH SUDDENLY ICED BY THE WIND OF FATE---
---AND THEN THE HUGE STATUE OF THE SUN GOD, ALREADY WEAKENED BY THE POWER-BLASTS OF THE PETRIFIED MAN, BEGINS TO TEETER LIKE A HALF-SAWED TREE, SWAYS BRIEFLY---
---AND FALLS!
KA-ZAR--?
WHOMP!
STAY, ZABU! IF THAT WERE INDEED YOUR MASTER WE SAW FALL WITHIN YON TEMPLE--
---THEN THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO TO--WAIT!
PALE AS A FLEETING WRAITH, A DUST-STREAKED FIGURE EMERGES FROM THE CLOUDING SMOKE---
SAFE! AND WHAT OF ZALADANE?
THE PRIESTESS HAS GONE TO MEET HER GOD---
THIS DAY HAS WEARIED ME, TONGAH, MY FRIEND! THERE IS MUCH TO BE THOUGHT ABOUT---
---MANY PRAYERS TO BE SAID!
LET'S LEAVE THIS STENCH OF EVIL, AND FIND AIR WITH THE TASTE OF LIFE IN IT! I'VE QUITE A TALE TO TELL---
NEXT: WHEN CRIES THE WIND DEMON!

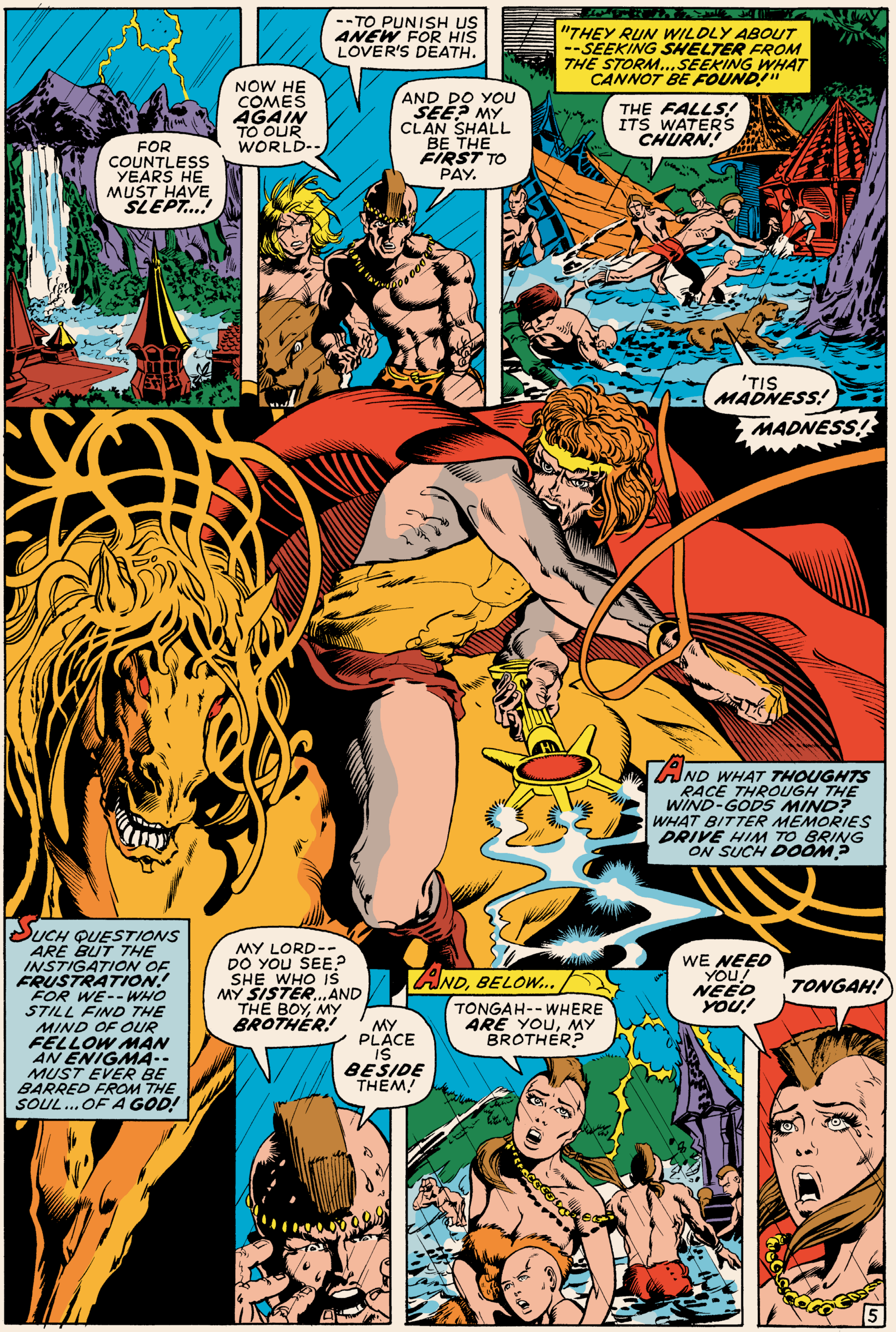
KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE JUNGLE!™

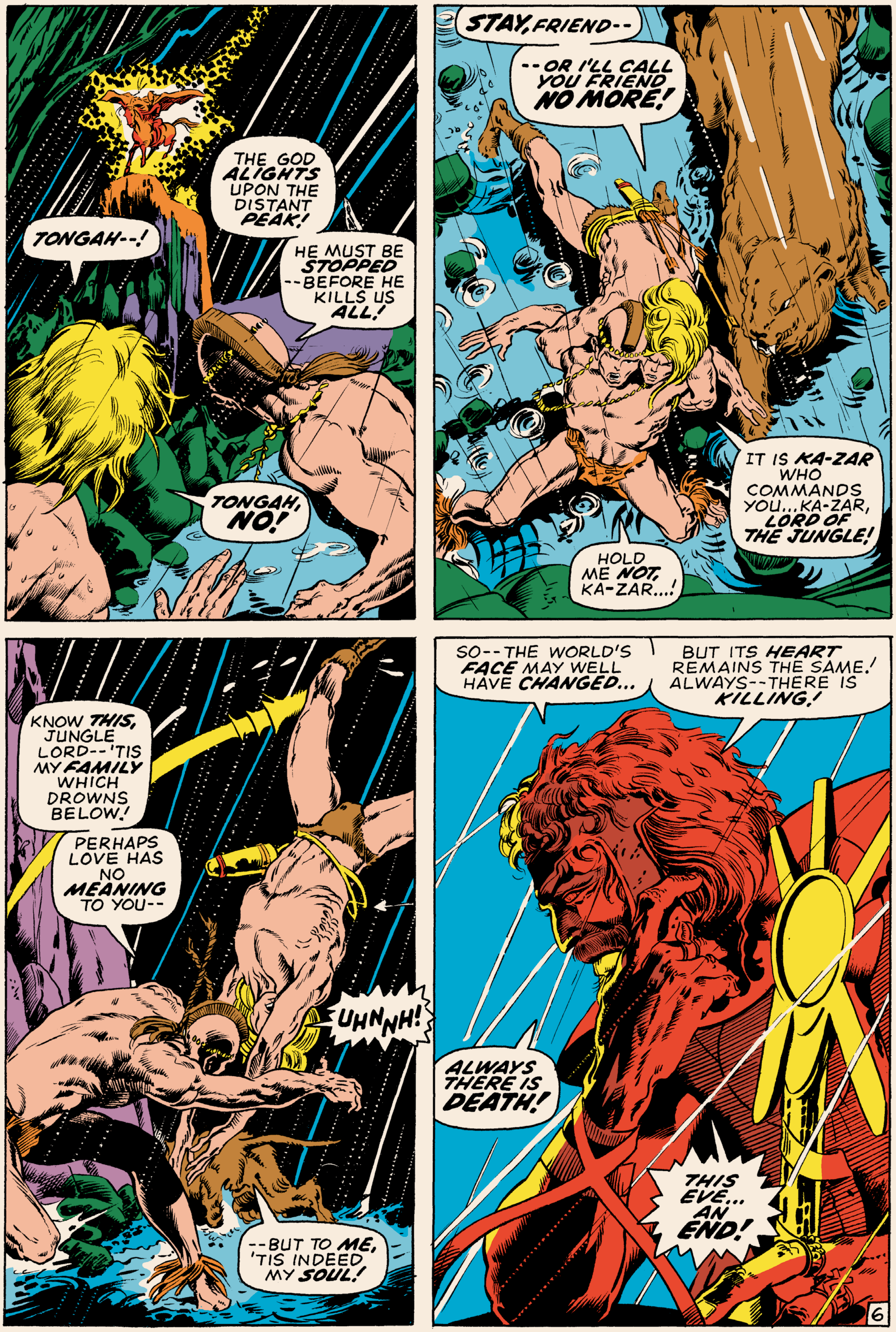

'Ware The WINDS of DEATH!
HAVING DEFEATED THE AWESOME ENTITY KNOWN AS THE SUN GOD, KA-ZAR AND HIS TACITURN COMPANION, TONGAH, JOURNEY NORTH-WARD TO THE BARBARIAN'S RIVER-SIDE HOME. NORTHWARD--THROUGH THE HILLS OF THE TIMELESS SAVAGE LAND!
RRRRRR
TONGAH!
COME OUT, MY FRIEND--AND TELL KA-ZAR IF HIS EYES LIE TO HIM!
WHAT IS IT, JUNGLE LORD?
THE SKY IS LIT--BY SOME STRANGE LIGHT--
AND I FEEL FILLED WITH ODD GLOOM!
WHAT MAGIC IS THIS?
WAKENED FROM A RESTLESS SLEEP BY THE NERVOUS SNARLINGS OF HIS TIGER ZABU, KA-ZAR LEAVES CAMPFIRE'S WARMTH, STEPPING OUT--INTO A WORLD SOON TO BE SUBTLY CHANGED--!
CREDITS: STAN LEE, EDITOR GERRY CONWAY, WRITER BARRY SMITH, PENCILLER BILL EVERETT, INKER ARTIE SIMEK, LETTERER

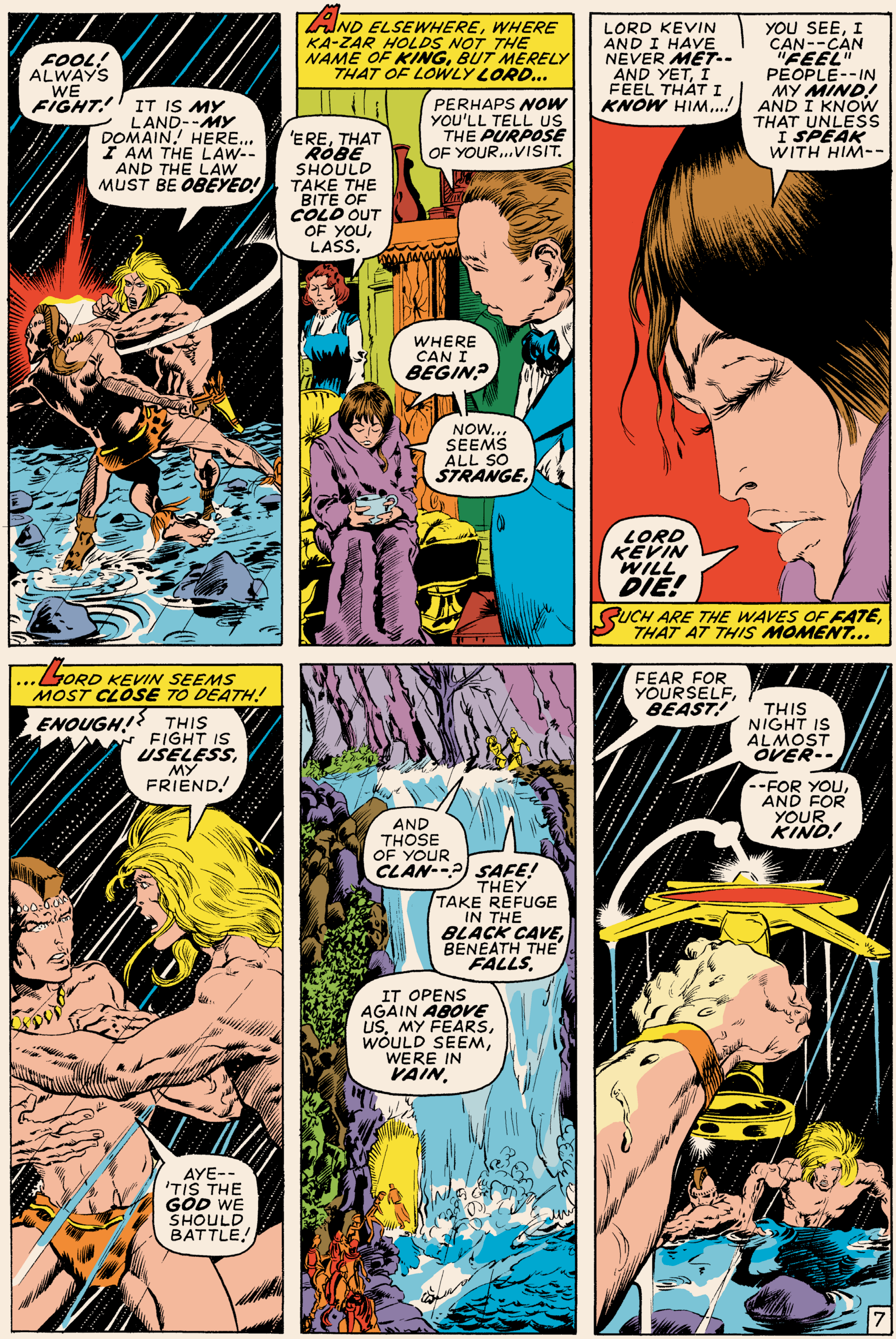

LIGHT.?
ALL IS DARK AS THE PITS OF HELL.
IT'S GONE, TONGAH!
FOR A MOMENT-- THE NIGHT SEEMED ON FIRE!
NOW, NOTHING --THOUGH, STILL KA-ZAR FEELS WORDLESS DREAD!
NO MATTER, MY LORD... WE BOTH NEED REST.
THERE'LL BE TIME FOR MYSTERIES ENOW--
--WHEN WE REACH MY VILLAGE, YONDER.!
NAY, BARBARIAN! TIME'S SANDS HAVE RUN THEIR COURSE--AND THIS EVE, THERE'S TIME--FOR NAUGHT BUT DEATH!
RRRRGH!!
KA-ZAR... DOWN!
THE SKY BURNS!
LIGHTNING WEBS AND LANCES LIKE A THING ALIVE, AND IN THE SHADOW'S MIDST...
THE CLOUDS-- DO YOU SEE?
A MAN--!
NOT SO, MY LORD! NOT JUST A MAN--
A GOD! A GOD!
2

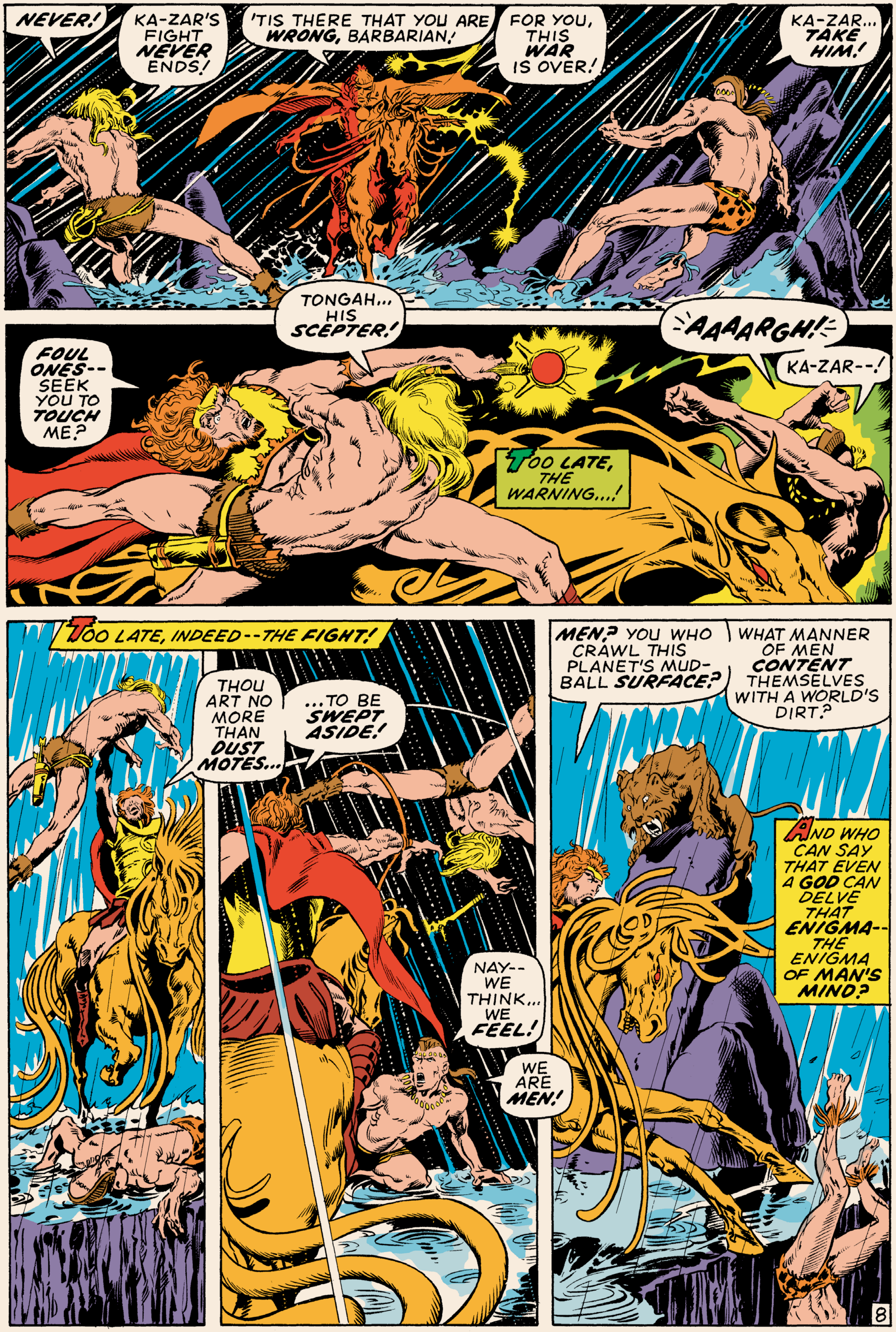

YEA-- A GOD!
'TIS MANY A YEAR SINCE LAST I RODE...
...SINCE LAST THIS HAND A SPEAR HELD!
MY EYES SEE THE WORLD HAS CHANGED!
--AND MUST NEEDS BE CLEANSED!
AND SO IT SHALL!
WHILE STILL THE GOD'S WORDS ECHO IN OUR MINDS--
--WE MUST SWITCH OUR SCENE TO FAR-OFF ENGLAND, WHERE A SIMILAR STORM RAGES--
HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY
--WHERE A FRIGHTENED GIRL RUNS!
HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY HURRY URRY
NOK! NOK
LORD KEVIN PLUNDER! WHERE IS HE? I MUST SPEAK WITH HIM!
'TIS A MATTER-- OF THE FATE OF WORLDS!
HEAVENS, CHILD!
LORD KEVIN IS AWAY...BUT PERHAPS I--?
AND WHAT MEANING HAS THIS TO OUR STORY? MEANING, IN THAT LORD KEVIN... IS KA-ZAR...!
KA-ZAR! IT IS A DREAM!
I REMEMBER NOW...THE LEGEND!
3

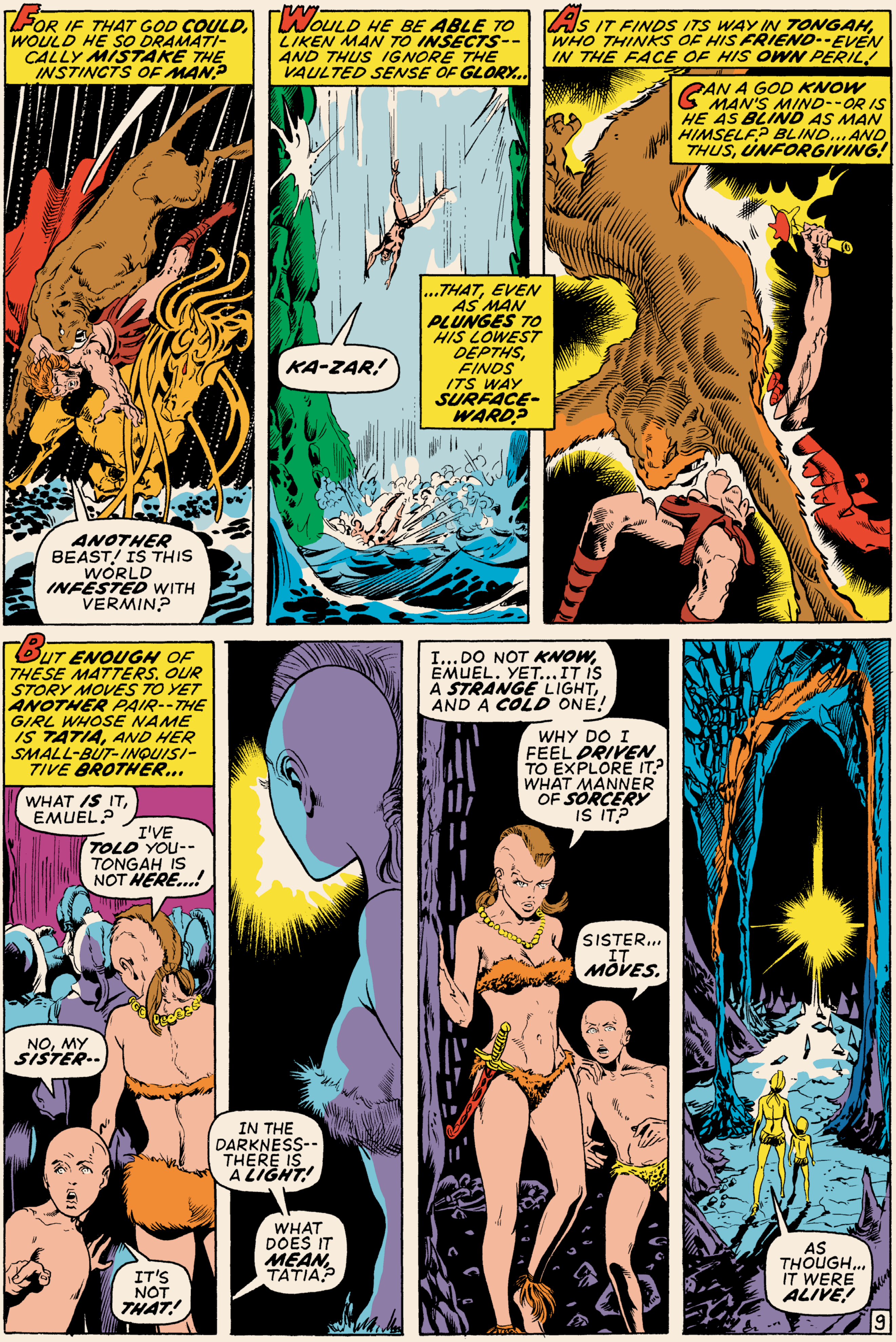

"HALF A HUNDRED CENTURIES AGO, LEGEND HAS IT THAT THERE CAME TWO LOVERS TO OUR LAND...
"BORN OF A FAR-DISTANT WORLD, THEY WERE LIKE GODS...YET THEY MOVED LIKE HUMANS THROUGH OUR FIELDS...
"HER NAME WAS LELANIA--SHE OF THE GOLDEN HAIR! HE THEY NAMED DAMON, AND IN HIS HANDS, THE SKY WAS CLAY...
"LIKE HUMANS, THEY DARED DREAM OF PEACE AND LOVE.
"LIKE HUMANS, THEIR DREAM WAS DOOMED...
"...FOR INTO THEIR DREAM--
"--CAME HARSH REALITY...
"REALITY...IN THE FORM OF A TRAGIC DEATH!
LELANIA!
GODS IN THE UNIVERSE --NO!
"SORROW DROVE HIM MAD...HE TORE AT THE SKY.
"BUT FOR ALL HIS POWER... HE WAS HELPLESS!
"HIS GRIEF DROVE HIM TO STRIKE OUT BLINDLY AT THE WORLD ABOUT HIM--AND FOR CLOSE ON FORTY DAYS, HE BROUGHT A DROWNING FLOOD UPON THE SAVAGE LAND...
4.

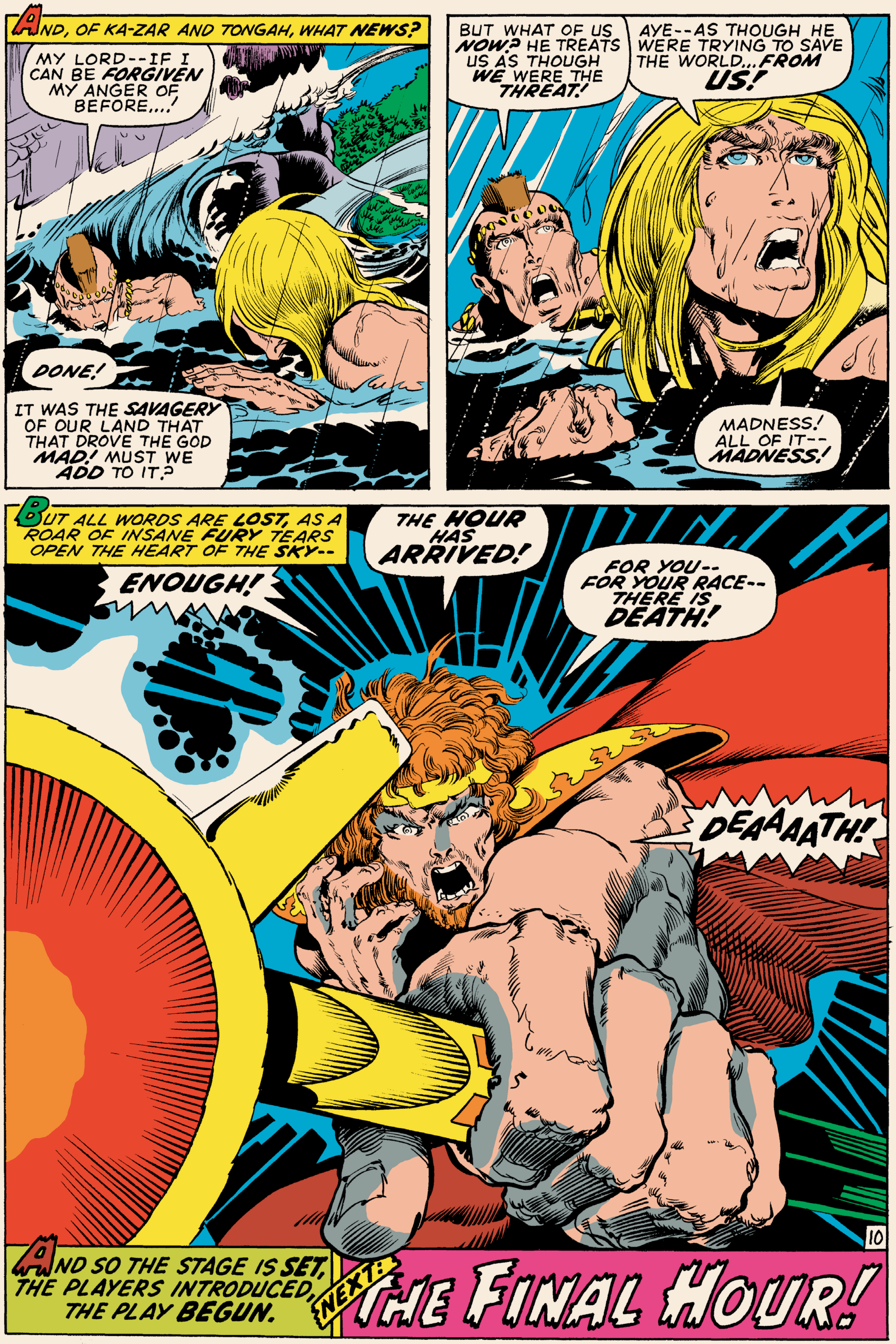

FOR COUNTLESS YEARS HE MUST HAVE SLEPT...!
NOW HE COMES AGAIN TO OUR WORLD--
--TO PUNISH US ANEW FOR HIS LOVER'S DEATH.
AND DO YOU SEE? MY CLAN SHALL BE THE FIRST TO PAY.
"THEY RUN WILDLY ABOUT --SEEKING SHELTER FROM THE STORM...SEEKING WHAT CANNOT BE FOUND!"
THE FALLS! ITS WATERS CHURN!
'TIS MADNESS!
MADNESS!
AND WHAT THOUGHTS RACE THROUGH THE WIND-GODS MIND? WHAT BITTER MEMORIES DRIVE HIM TO BRING ON SUCH DOOM?
SUCH QUESTIONS ARE BUT THE INSTIGATION OF FRUSTRATION! FOR WE--WHO STILL FIND THE MIND OF OUR FELLOW MAN AN ENIGMA--MUST EVER BE BARRED FROM THE SOUL...OF A GOD!
MY LORD-- DO YOU SEE? SHE WHO IS MY SISTER...AND THE BOY, MY BROTHER!
MY PLACE IS BESIDE THEM!
AND, BELOW...
TONGAH--WHERE ARE YOU, MY BROTHER?
WE NEED YOU! NEED YOU!
TONGAH!
5


THE GOD ALIGHTS UPON THE DISTANT PEAK!
TONGAH--!
HE MUST BE STOPPED --BEFORE HE KILLS US ALL!
TONGAH, NO!
STAY, FRIEND--
--OR I'LL CALL YOU FRIEND NO MORE!
IT IS KA-ZAR WHO COMMANDS YOU...KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE JUNGLE!
HOLD ME NOT, KA-ZAR...!
KNOW THIS, JUNGLE LORD--'TIS MY FAMILY WHICH DROWNS BELOW!
PERHAPS LOVE HAS NO MEANING TO YOU--
UHNNH!
--BUT TO ME, 'TIS INDEED MY SOUL!
SO--THE WORLD'S FACE MAY WELL HAVE CHANGED...
BUT ITS HEART REMAINS THE SAME! ALWAYS--THERE IS KILLING!
ALWAYS THERE IS DEATH!
THIS EVE... AN END!
6


FOOL! ALWAYS WE FIGHT!
IT IS MY LAND--MY DOMAIN! HERE... I AM THE LAW-- AND THE LAW MUST BE OBEYED!
AND ELSEWHERE, WHERE KA-ZAR HOLDS NOT THE NAME OF KING, BUT MERELY THAT OF LOWLY LORD...
PERHAPS NOW YOU'LL TELL US THE PURPOSE OF YOUR...VISIT.
'ERE, THAT ROBE SHOULD TAKE THE BITE OF COLD OUT OF YOU, LASS.
WHERE CAN I BEGIN?
NOW... SEEMS ALL SO STRANGE.
LORD KEVIN AND I HAVE NEVER MET-- AND YET, I FEEL THAT I KNOW HIM...!
YOU SEE, I CAN--CAN "FEEL" PEOPLE--IN MY MIND! AND I KNOW THAT UNLESS I SPEAK WITH HIM--
LORD KEVIN WILL DIE!
SUCH ARE THE WAVES OF FATE, THAT AT THIS MOMENT...
...LORD KEVIN SEEMS MOST CLOSE TO DEATH!
ENOUGH!
THIS FIGHT IS USELESS, MY FRIEND!
AYE-- 'TIS THE GOD WE SHOULD BATTLE!
AND THOSE OF YOUR CLAN--?
SAFE! THEY TAKE REFUGE IN THE BLACK CAVE, BENEATH THE FALLS.
IT OPENS AGAIN ABOVE US, MY FEARS, WOULD SEEM, WERE IN VAIN.
FEAR FOR YOURSELF, BEAST!
THIS NIGHT IS ALMOST OVER--
--FOR YOU, AND FOR YOUR KIND!
7

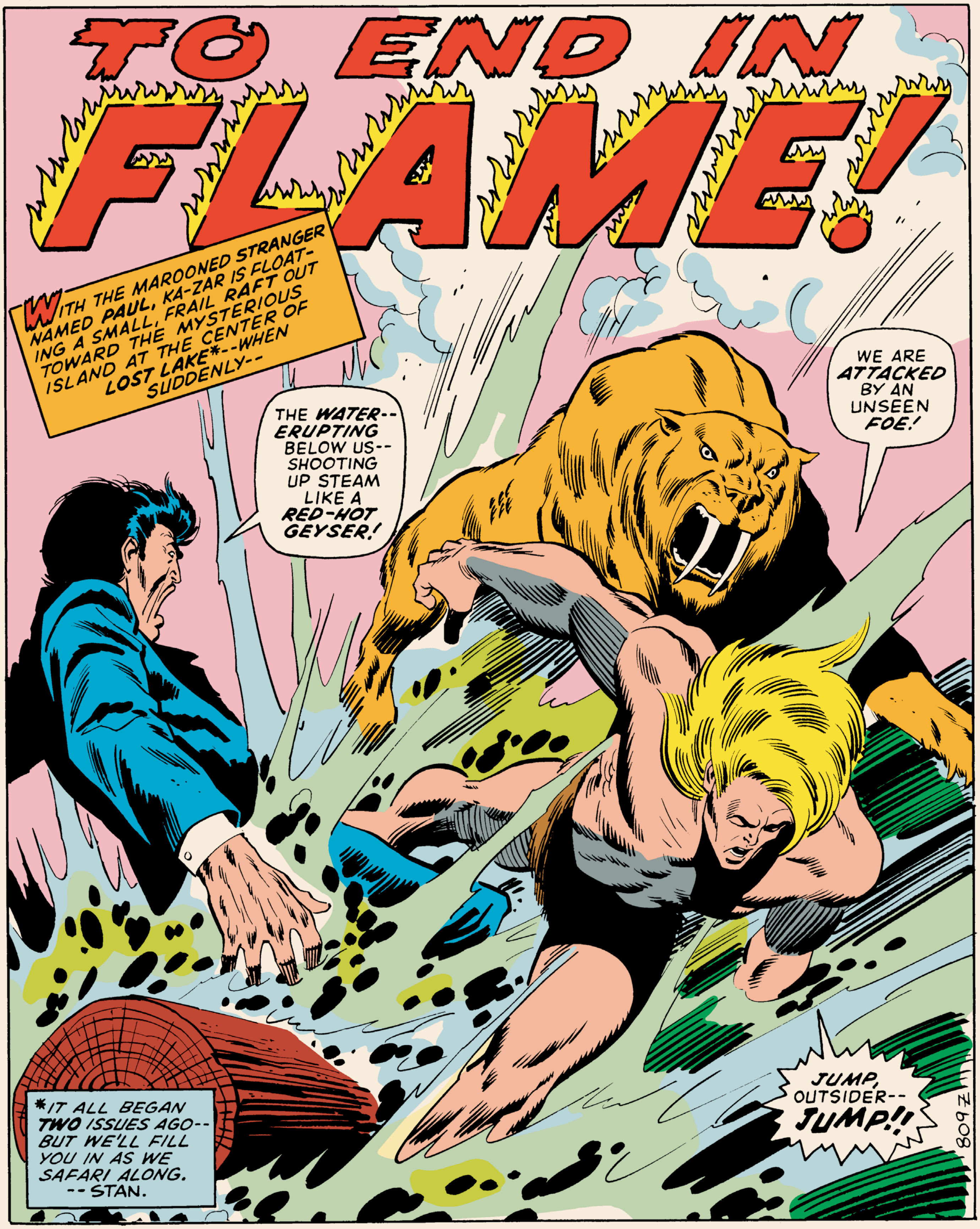

NEVER!
KA-ZAR'S FIGHT NEVER ENDS!
'TIS THERE THAT YOU ARE WRONG, BARBARIAN!
FOR YOU, THIS WAR IS OVER!
KA-ZAR... TAKE HIM!
TONGAH... HIS SCEPTER!
FOUL ONES-- SEEK YOU TO TOUCH ME?
AAAARGH!
KA-ZAR--!
TOO LATE, THE WARNING...!
TOO LATE, INDEED--THE FIGHT!
THOU ART NO MORE THAN DUST MOTES...
...TO BE SWEPT ASIDE!
NAY-- WE THINK... WE FEEL!
WE ARE MEN!
MEN? YOU WHO CRAWL THIS PLANET'S MUD-BALL SURFACE?
WHAT MANNER OF MEN CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH A WORLD'S DIRT?
AND WHO CAN SAY THAT EVEN A GOD CAN DELVE THAT ENIGMA-- THE ENIGMA OF MAN'S MIND?
8

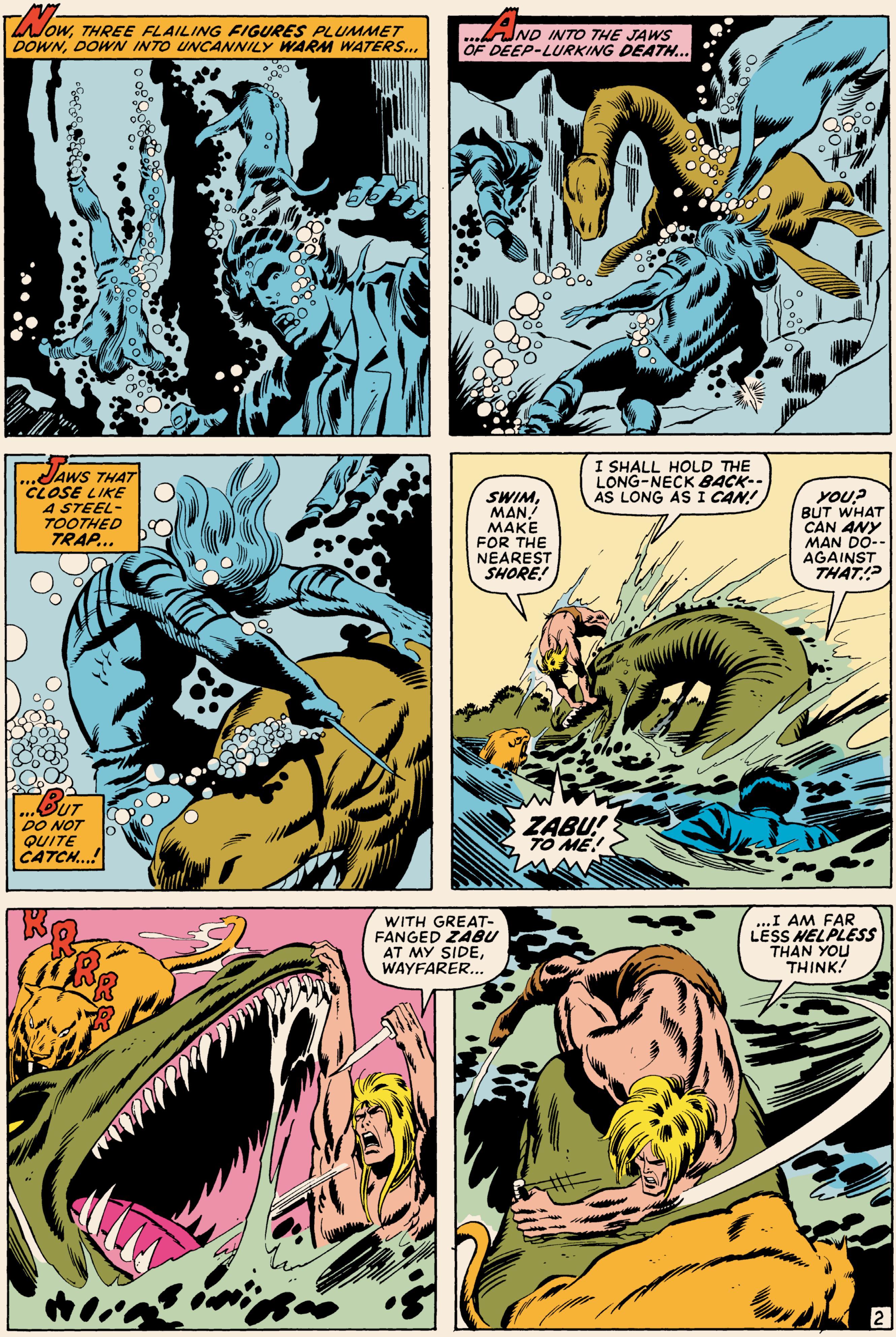

FOR IF THAT GOD COULD, WOULD HE SO DRAMATICALLY MISTAKE THE INSTINCTS OF MAN?
ANOTHER BEAST! IS THIS WORLD INFESTED WITH VERMIN?
WOULD HE BE ABLE TO LIKEN MAN TO INSECTS--AND THUS IGNORE THE VAULTED SENSE OF GLORY...
...THAT, EVEN AS MAN PLUNGES TO HIS LOWEST DEPTHS, FINDS ITS WAY SURFACEWARD?
KA-ZAR!
AS IT FINDS ITS WAY IN TONGAH, WHO THINKS OF HIS FRIEND--EVEN IN THE FACE OF HIS OWN PERIL!
CAN A GOD KNOW MAN'S MIND--OR IS HE AS BLIND AS MAN HIMSELF? BLIND...AND THUS, UNFORGIVING!
BUT ENOUGH OF THESE MATTERS. OUR STORY MOVES TO YET ANOTHER PAIR--THE GIRL WHOSE NAME IS TATIA, AND HER SMALL-BUT-INQUISITIVE BROTHER...
WHAT IS IT, EMUEL.?
I'VE TOLD YOU--TONGAH IS NOT HERE...!
NO, MY SISTER--
IT'S NOT THAT!
IN THE DARKNESS--THERE IS A LIGHT!
WHAT DOES IT MEAN, TATIA?
I...DO NOT KNOW, EMUEL. YET...IT IS A STRANGE LIGHT, AND A COLD ONE!
WHY DO I FEEL DRIVEN TO EXPLORE IT? WHAT MANNER OF SORCERY IS IT?
SISTER... IT MOVES.
AS THOUGH... IT WERE ALIVE!
9

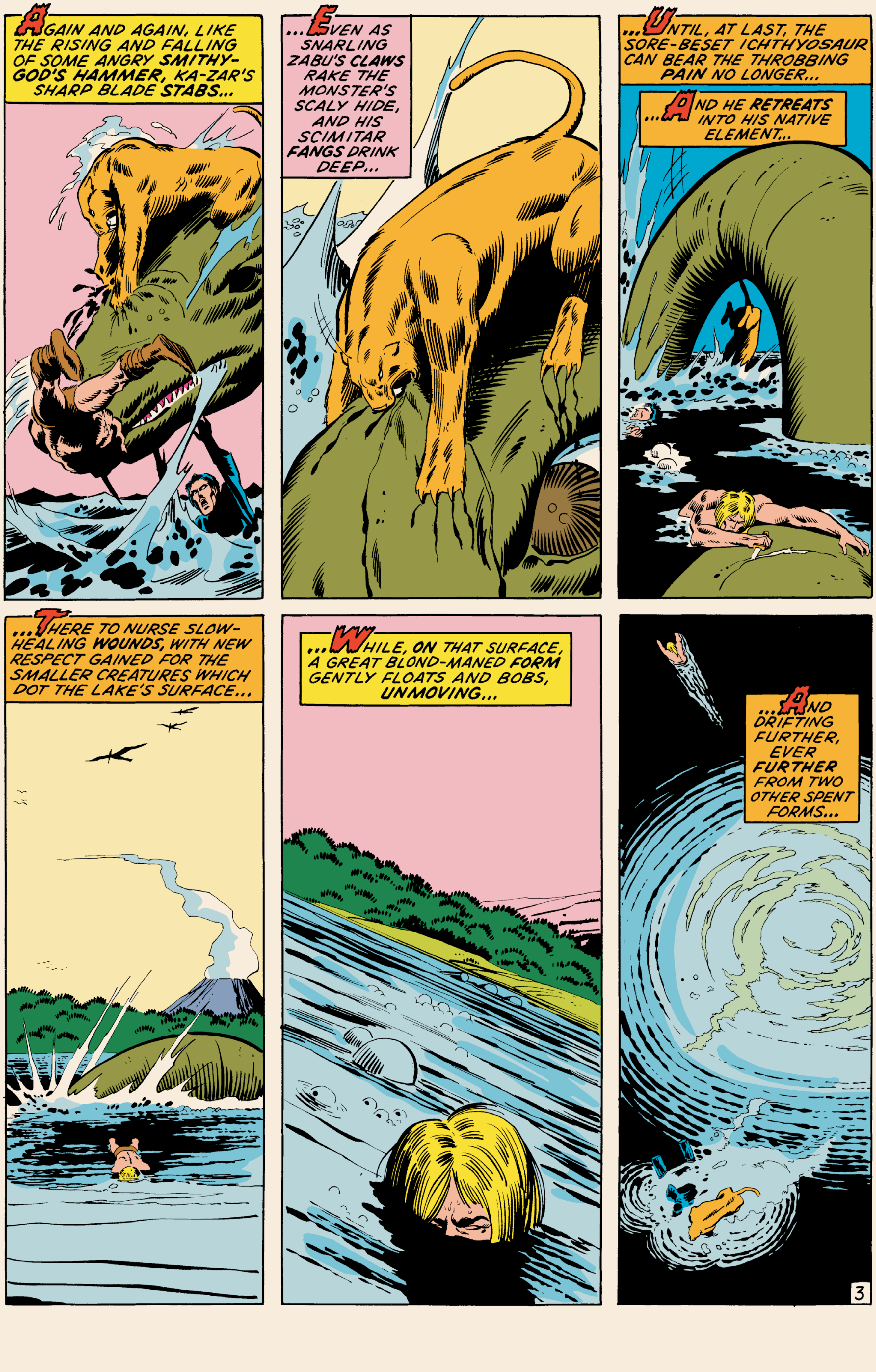

AND, OF KA-ZAR AND TONGAH, WHAT NEWS?
MY LORD--IF I CAN BE FORGIVEN MY ANGER OF BEFORE....!
DONE!
IT WAS THE SAVAGERY OF OUR LAND THAT THAT DROVE THE GOD MAD! MUST WE ADD TO IT?
BUT WHAT OF US NOW? HE TREATS US AS THOUGH WE WERE THE THREAT!
AYE--AS THOUGH HE WERE TRYING TO SAVE THE WORLD...FROM US!
MADNESS! ALL OF IT-- MADNESS!
BUT ALL WORDS ARE LOST, AS A ROAR OF INSANE FURY TEARS OPEN THE HEART OF THE SKY--
ENOUGH!
THE HOUR HAS ARRIVED!
FOR YOU-- FOR YOUR RACE-- THERE IS DEATH!
DEAAAATH!
10
AND SO THE STAGE IS SET, THE PLAYERS INTRODUCED, THE PLAY BEGUN.
NEXT: THE FINAL HOUR!

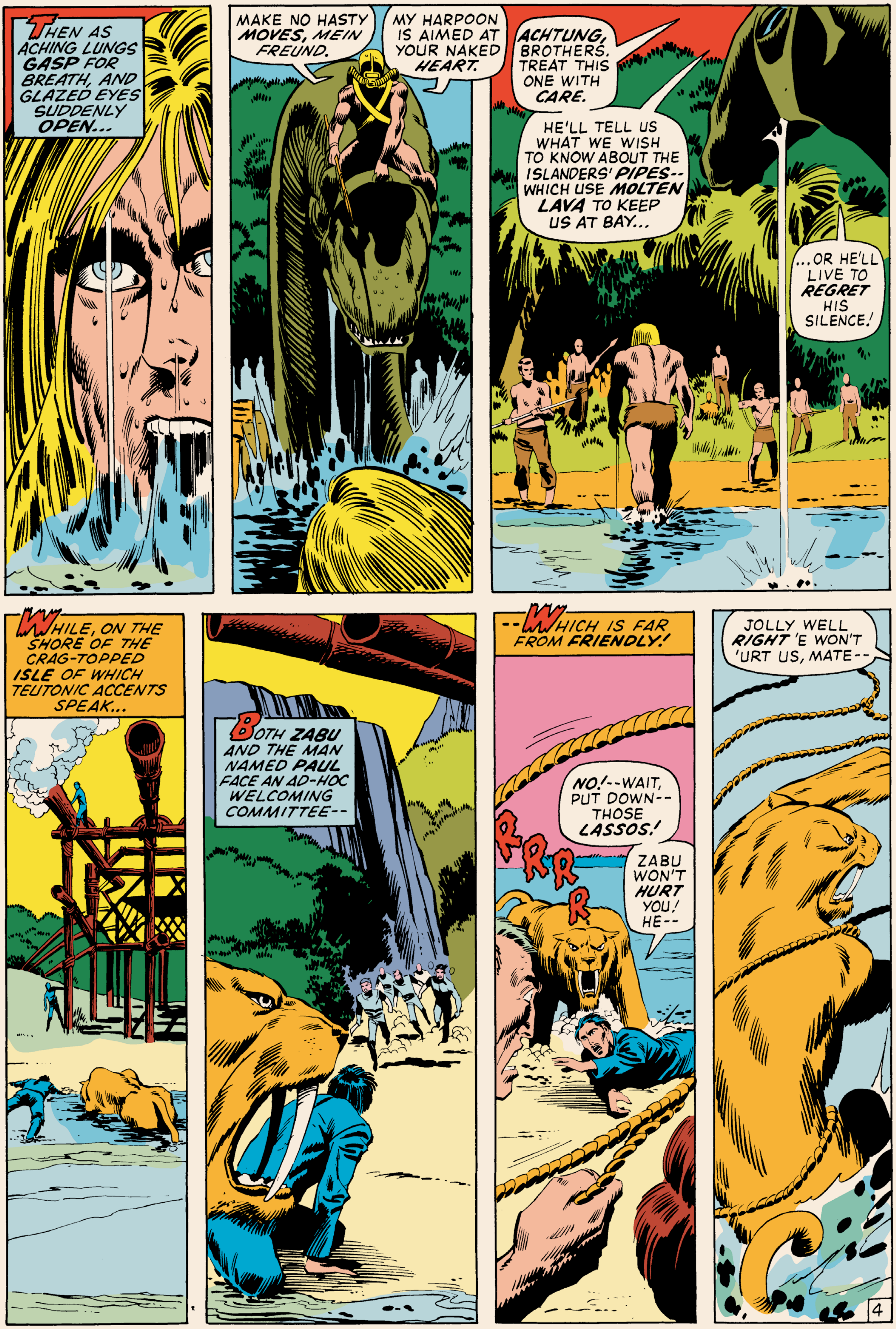
KA-ZAR, LORD OF THE JUNGLE!™

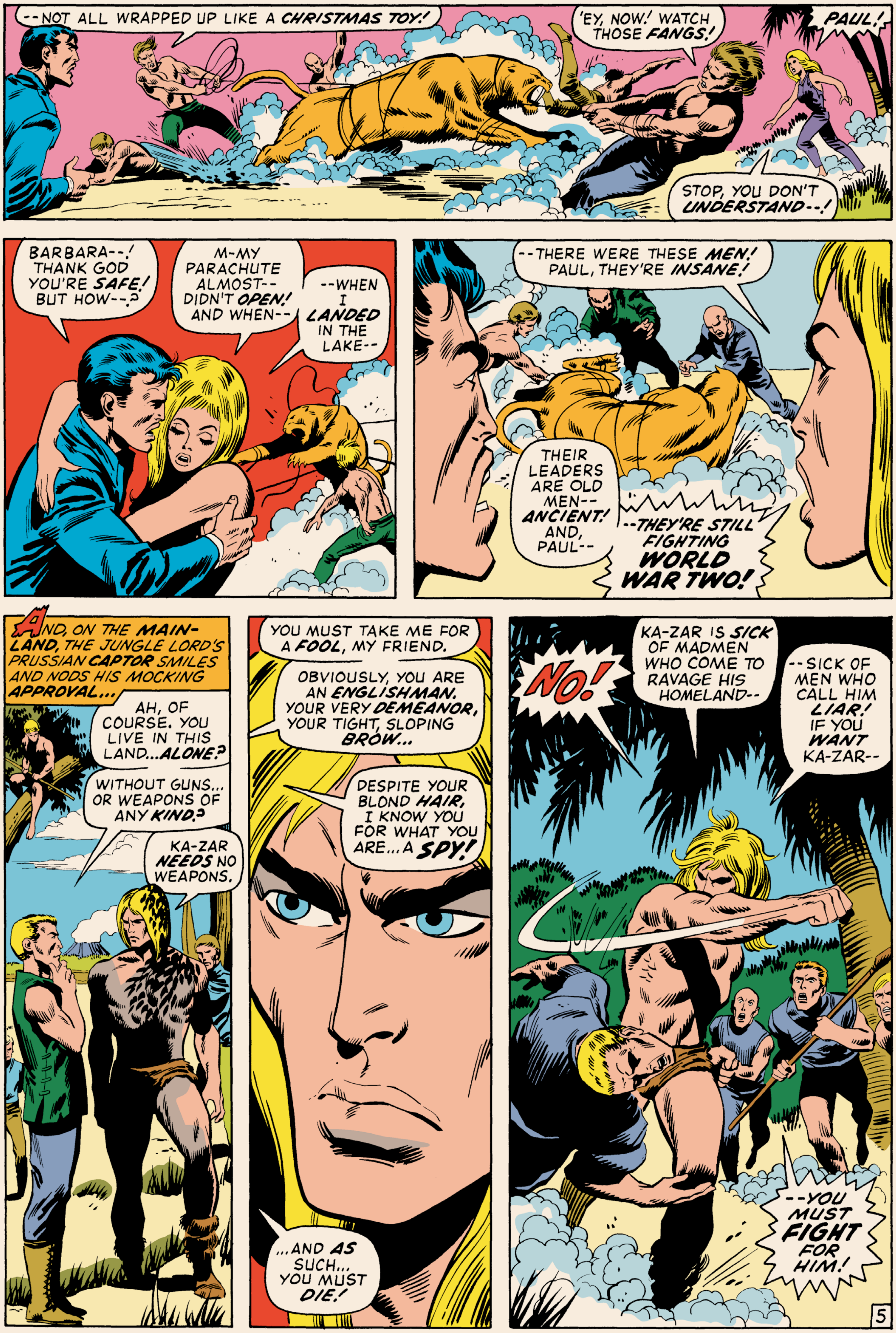
STAN LEE EDITOR ✦ **ROY THOMAS** *and* **GERRY CONWAY** WRITERS ✦ **BARRY SMITH** *and* **SAL BUSCEMA** ARTISTS ✦ **ART SIMEK** LETTERER

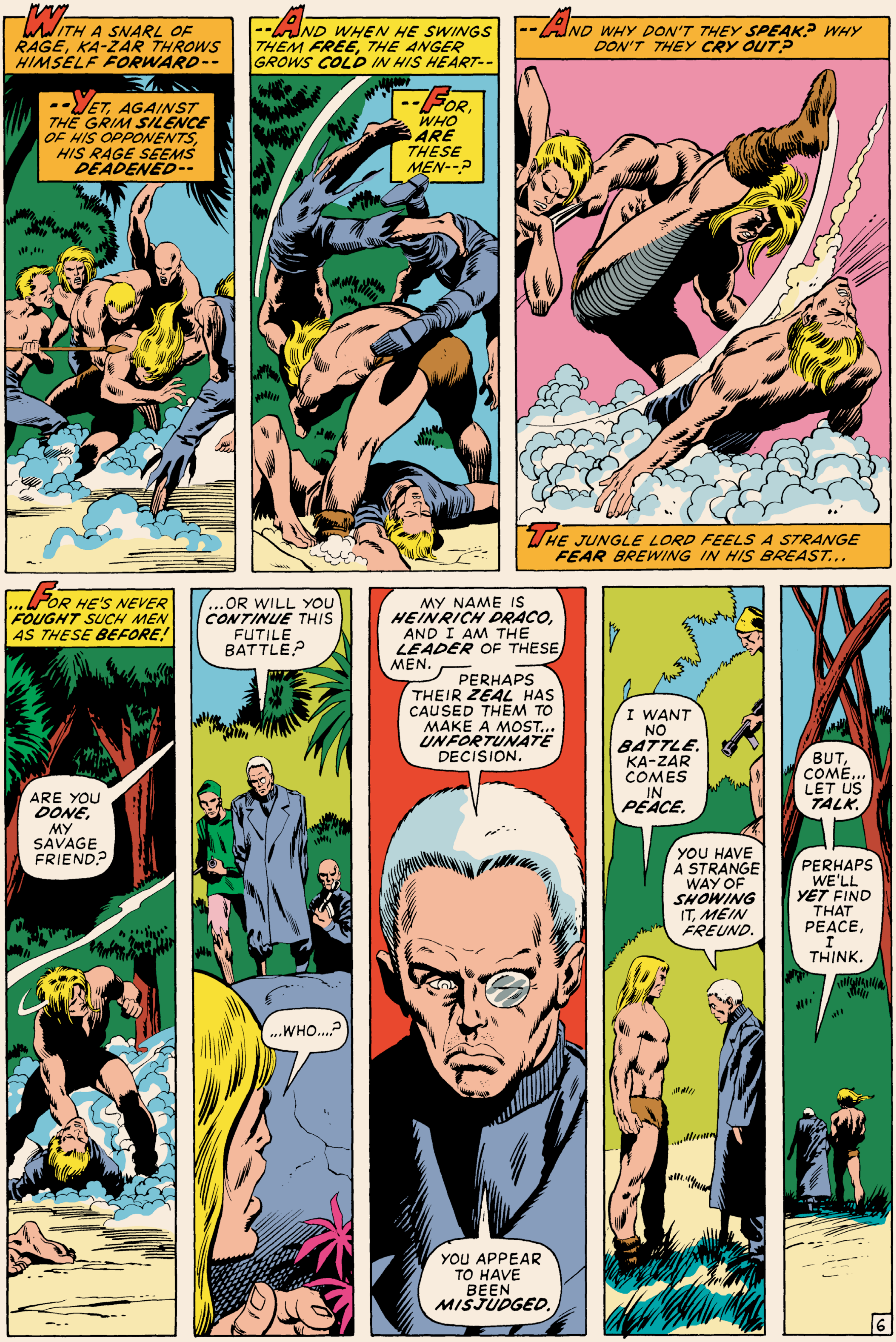

TO END IN FLAME!
WITH THE MAROONED STRANGER NAMED PAUL, KA-ZAR IS FLOATING A SMALL, FRAIL RAFT OUT TOWARD THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND AT THE CENTER OF LOST LAKE*--WHEN SUDDENLY--
THE WATER-- ERUPTING BELOW US-- SHOOTING UP STEAM LIKE A RED-HOT GEYSER!
WE ARE ATTACKED BY AN UNSEEN FOE!
JUMP, OUTSIDER-- JUMP!!
*IT ALL BEGAN TWO ISSUES AGO-- BUT WE'LL FILL YOU IN AS WE SAFARI ALONG. --STAN.

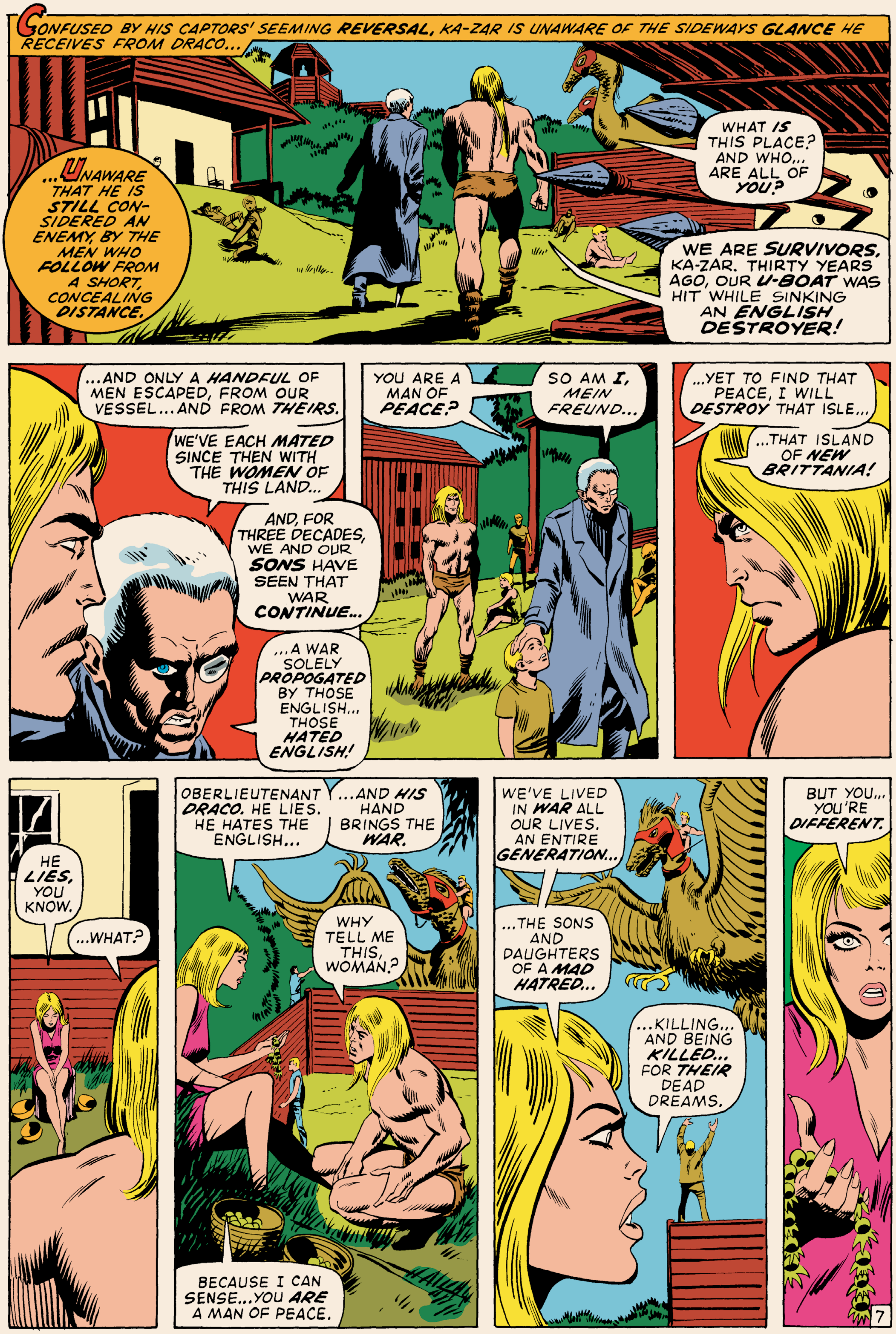

NOW, THREE FLAILING FIGURES PLUMMET DOWN, DOWN INTO UNCANNILY WARM WATERS...
...AND INTO THE JAWS OF DEEP-LURKING DEATH...
...JAWS THAT CLOSE LIKE A STEEL-TOOTHED TRAP...
...BUT DO NOT QUITE CATCH...!
SWIM, MAN! MAKE FOR THE NEAREST SHORE!
I SHALL HOLD THE LONG-NECK BACK-- AS LONG AS I CAN!
YOU? BUT WHAT CAN ANY MAN DO-- AGAINST THAT!?
ZABU! TO ME!
RRRRRR
WITH GREAT-FANGED ZABU AT MY SIDE, WAYFARER...
...I AM FAR LESS HELPLESS THAN YOU THINK!
2

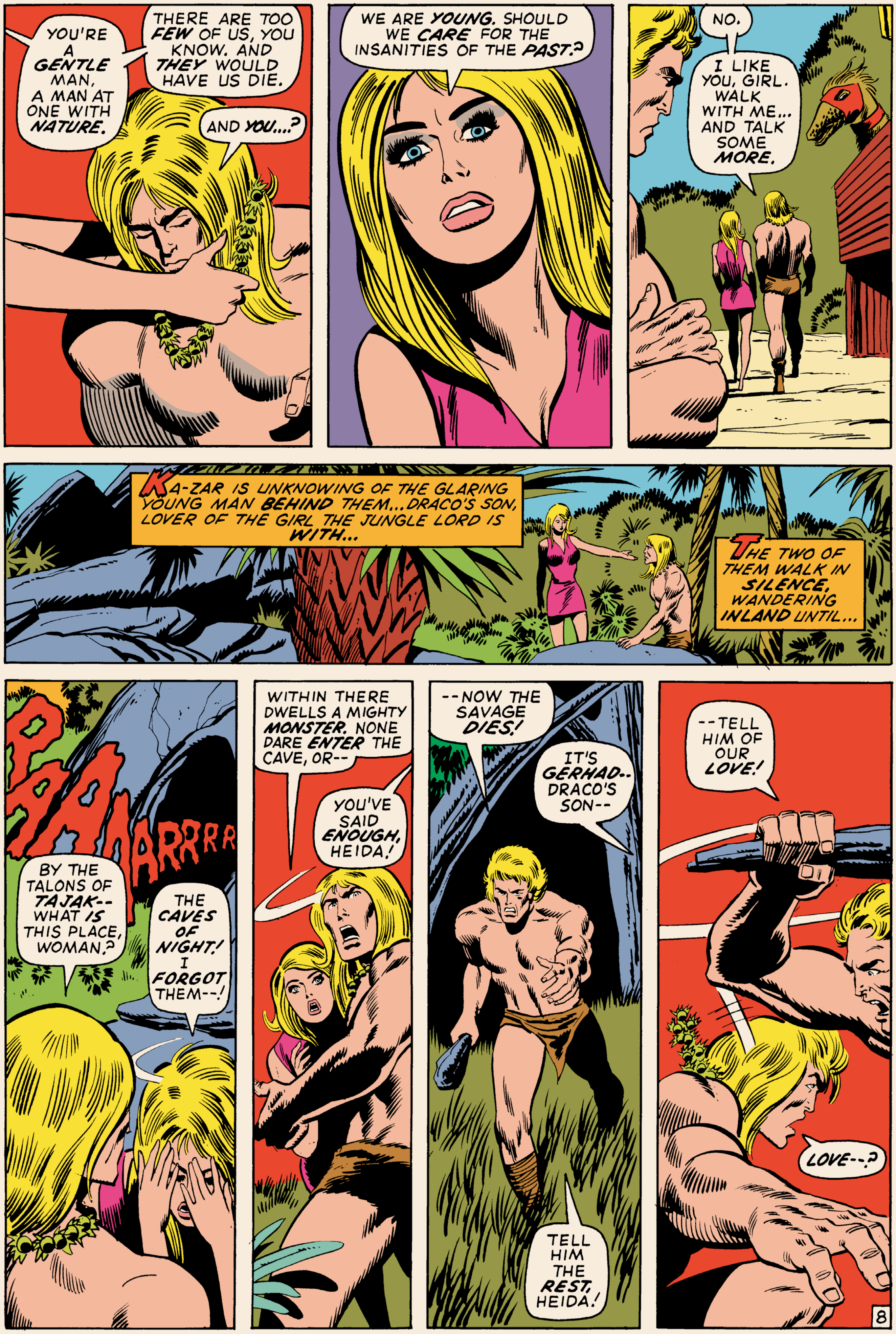

AGAIN AND AGAIN, LIKE THE RISING AND FALLING OF SOME ANGRY SMITHY-GOD'S HAMMER, KA-ZAR'S SHARP BLADE STABS...
...EVEN AS SNARLING ZABU'S CLAWS RAKE THE MONSTER'S SCALY HIDE, AND HIS SCIMITAR FANGS DRINK DEEP...
...UNTIL, AT LAST, THE SORE-BESET ICHTHYOSAUR CAN BEAR THE THROBBING PAIN NO LONGER...
...AND HE RETREATS INTO HIS NATIVE ELEMENT...
...THERE TO NURSE SLOW-HEALING WOUNDS, WITH NEW RESPECT GAINED FOR THE SMALLER CREATURES WHICH DOT THE LAKE'S SURFACE...
...WHILE, ON THAT SURFACE, A GREAT BLOND-MANED FORM GENTLY FLOATS AND BOBS, UNMOVING...
...AND DRIFTING FURTHER, EVER FURTHER FROM TWO OTHER SPENT FORMS...
3

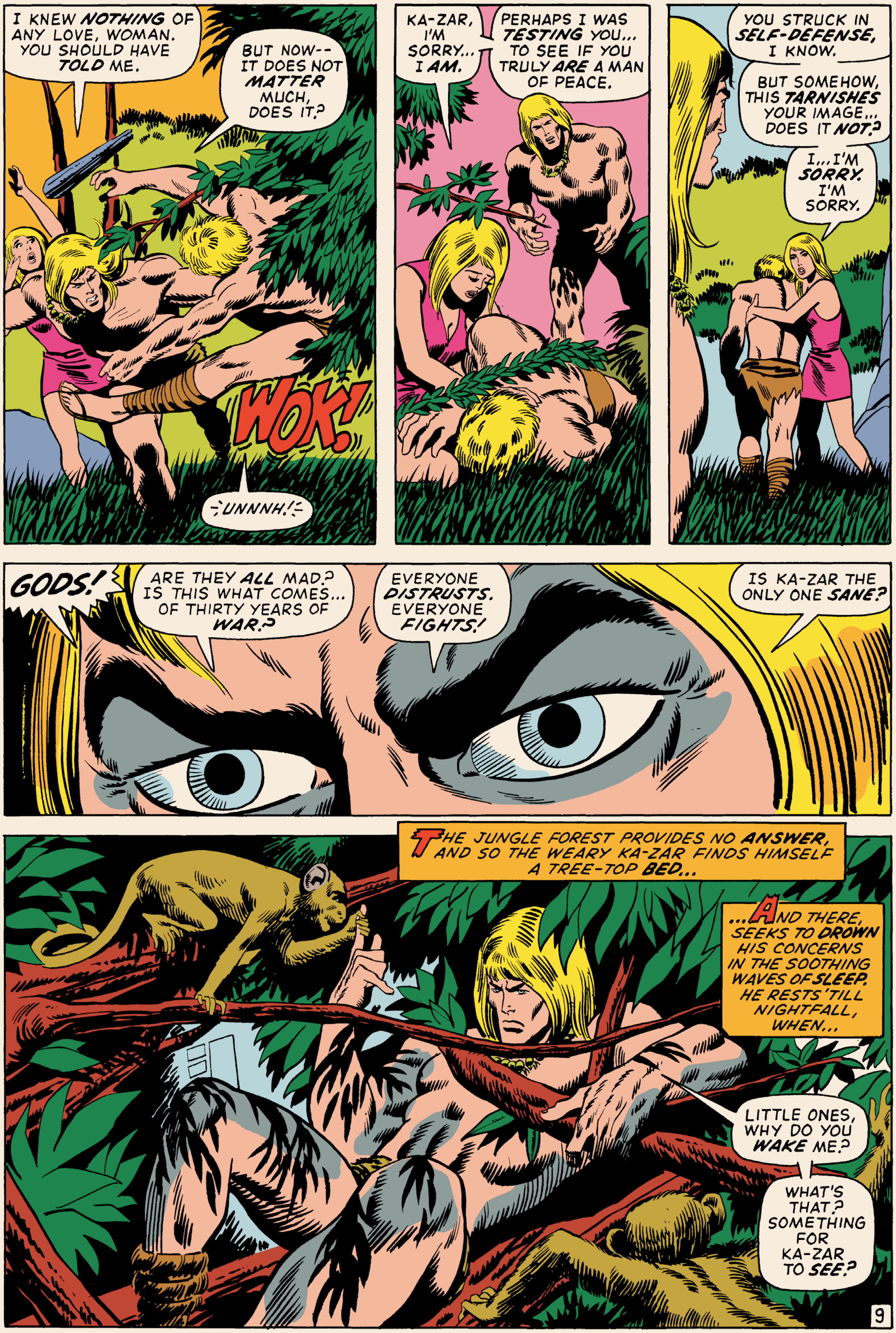

THEN AS ACHING LUNGS GASP FOR BREATH, AND GLAZED EYES SUDDENLY OPEN...
MAKE NO HASTY MOVES, MEIN FREUND.
MY HARPOON IS AIMED AT YOUR NAKED HEART.
ACHTUNG, BROTHERS. TREAT THIS ONE WITH CARE.
HE'LL TELL US WHAT WE WISH TO KNOW ABOUT THE ISLANDERS' PIPES--WHICH USE MOLTEN LAVA TO KEEP US AT BAY...
...OR HE'LL LIVE TO REGRET HIS SILENCE!
WHILE, ON THE SHORE OF THE CRAG-TOPPED ISLE OF WHICH TEUTONIC ACCENTS SPEAK...
BOTH ZABU AND THE MAN NAMED PAUL FACE AN AD-HOC WELCOMING COMMITTEE--
--WHICH IS FAR FROM FRIENDLY!
NO!--WAIT, PUT DOWN--THOSE LASSOS!
RRRRR
ZABU WON'T HURT YOU! HE--
JOLLY WELL RIGHT 'E WON'T 'URT US, MATE--
4

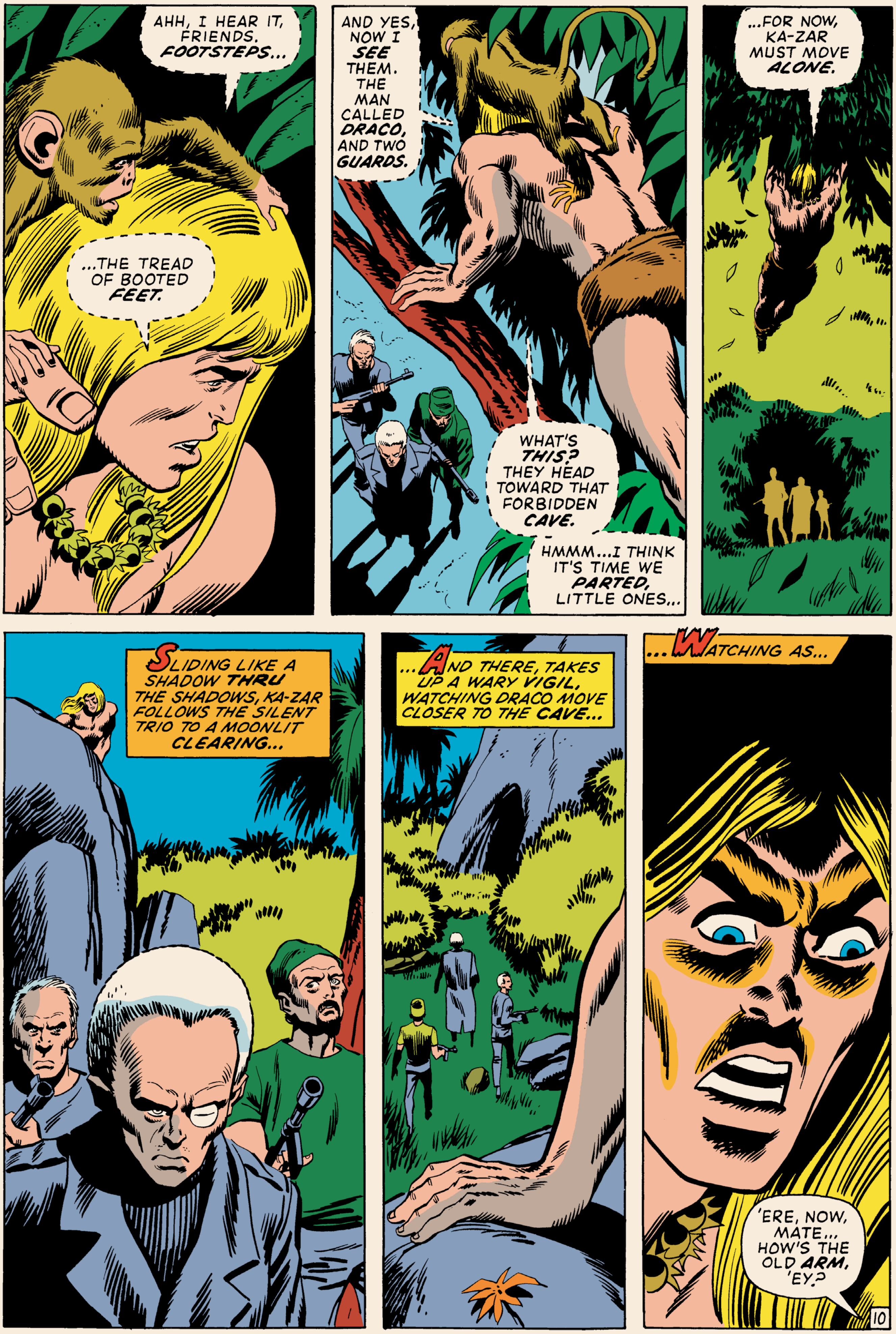

--NOT ALL WRAPPED UP LIKE A CHRISTMAS TOY!
'EY, NOW! WATCH THOSE FANGS!
PAUL!
STOP, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--!
BARBARA--! THANK GOD YOU'RE SAFE! BUT HOW--?
M-MY PARACHUTE ALMOST--DIDN'T OPEN! AND WHEN--
--WHEN I LANDED IN THE LAKE--
--THERE WERE THESE MEN! PAUL, THEY'RE INSANE!
THEIR LEADERS ARE OLD MEN--ANCIENT! AND, PAUL--
--THEY'RE STILL FIGHTING WORLD WAR TWO!
AND, ON THE MAINLAND, THE JUNGLE LORD'S PRUSSIAN CAPTOR SMILES AND NODS HIS MOCKING APPROVAL...
AH, OF COURSE. YOU LIVE IN THIS LAND...ALONE?
WITHOUT GUNS... OR WEAPONS OF ANY KIND?
KA-ZAR NEEDS NO WEAPONS.
YOU MUST TAKE ME FOR A FOOL, MY FRIEND.
OBVIOUSLY, YOU ARE AN ENGLISHMAN. YOUR VERY DEMEANOR, YOUR TIGHT, SLOPING BROW...
DESPITE YOUR BLOND HAIR, I KNOW YOU FOR WHAT YOU ARE...A SPY!
...AND AS SUCH... YOU MUST DIE!
NO!
KA-ZAR IS SICK OF MADMEN WHO COME TO RAVAGE HIS HOMELAND--
--SICK OF MEN WHO CALL HIM LIAR! IF YOU WANT KA-ZAR--
--YOU MUST FIGHT FOR HIM!
5

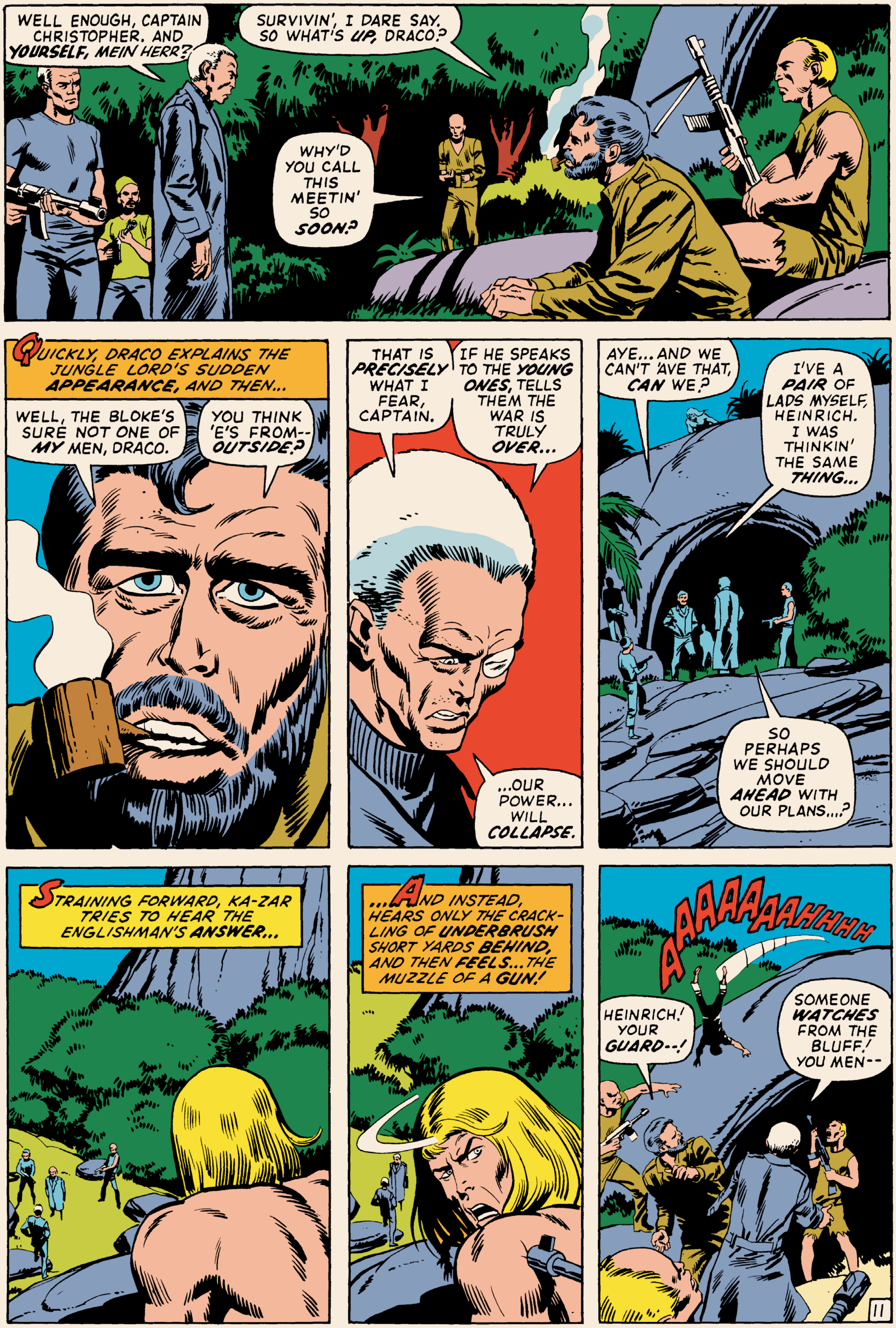

WITH A SNARL OF RAGE, KA-ZAR THROWS HIMSELF FORWARD--
--YET, AGAINST THE GRIM SILENCE OF HIS OPPONENTS, HIS RAGE SEEMS DEADENED--
--AND WHEN HE SWINGS THEM FREE, THE ANGER GROWS COLD IN HIS HEART--
--FOR, WHO ARE THESE MEN--?
--AND WHY DON'T THEY SPEAK? WHY DON'T THEY CRY OUT?
THE JUNGLE LORD FEELS A STRANGE FEAR BREWING IN HIS BREAST...
...FOR HE'S NEVER FOUGHT SUCH MEN AS THESE BEFORE!
ARE YOU DONE, MY SAVAGE FRIEND?
...OR WILL YOU CONTINUE THIS FUTILE BATTLE?
...WHO...?
MY NAME IS HEINRICH DRACO, AND I AM THE LEADER OF THESE MEN.
PERHAPS THEIR ZEAL HAS CAUSED THEM TO MAKE A MOST... UNFORTUNATE DECISION.
YOU APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN MISJUDGED.
I WANT NO BATTLE. KA-ZAR COMES IN PEACE.
YOU HAVE A STRANGE WAY OF SHOWING IT, MEIN FREUND.
BUT, COME... LET US TALK.
PERHAPS WE'LL YET FIND THAT PEACE, I THINK.
6

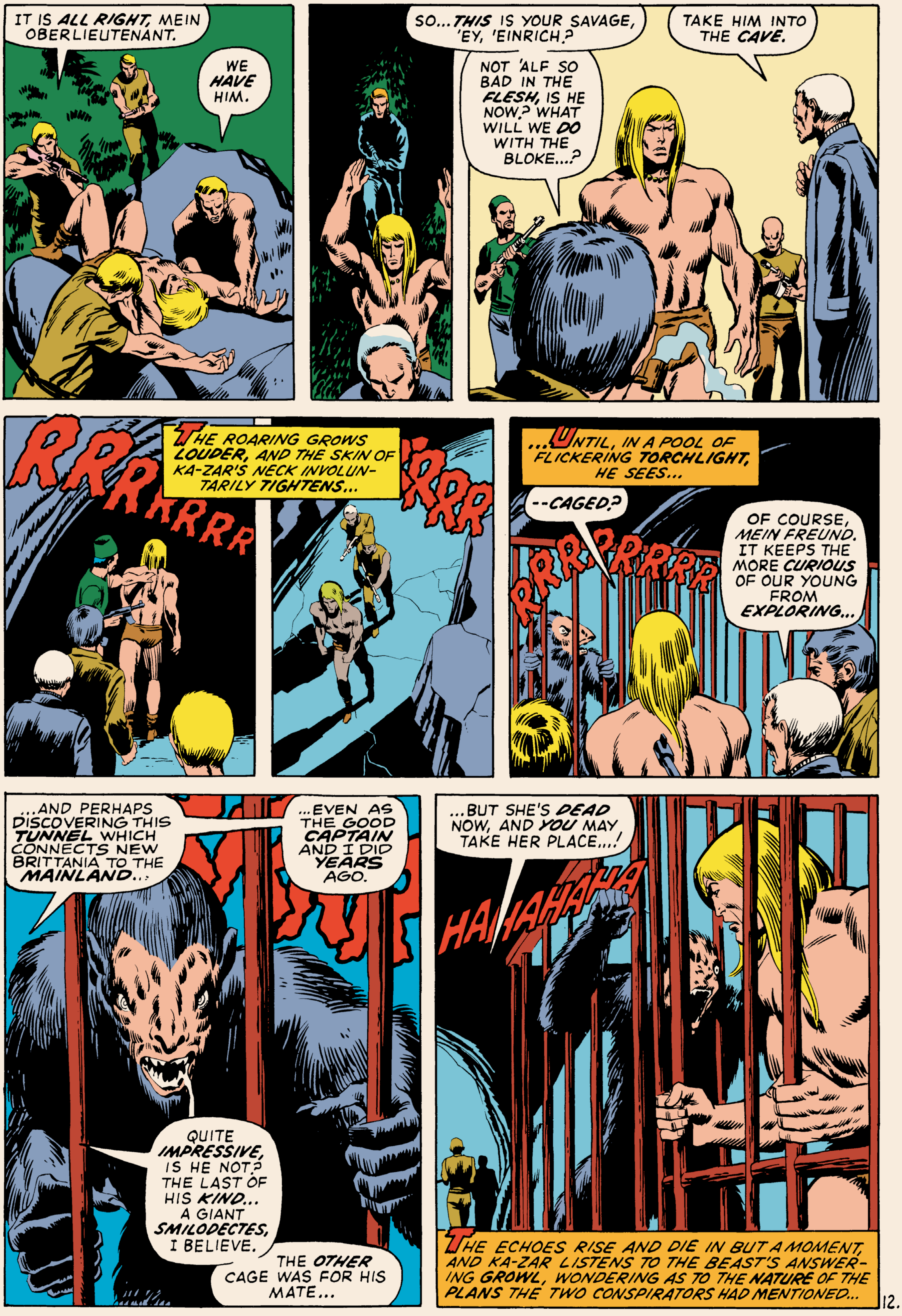

CONFUSED BY HIS CAPTORS' SEEMING REVERSAL, KA-ZAR IS UNAWARE OF THE SIDEWAYS GLANCE HE RECEIVES FROM DRACO...
...UNAWARE THAT HE IS STILL CONSIDERED AN ENEMY, BY THE MEN WHO FOLLOW FROM A SHORT, CONCEALING DISTANCE.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE? AND WHO... ARE ALL OF YOU?
WE ARE SURVIVORS, KA-ZAR. THIRTY YEARS AGO, OUR U-BOAT WAS HIT WHILE SINKING AN ENGLISH DESTROYER!
...AND ONLY A HANDFUL OF MEN ESCAPED, FROM OUR VESSEL...AND FROM THEIRS.
WE'VE EACH MATED SINCE THEN WITH THE WOMEN OF THIS LAND...
AND, FOR THREE DECADES, WE AND OUR SONS HAVE SEEN THAT WAR CONTINUE...
...A WAR SOLELY PROPOGATED BY THOSE ENGLISH... THOSE HATED ENGLISH!
YOU ARE A MAN OF PEACE?
SO AM I, MEIN FREUND...
...YET TO FIND THAT PEACE, I WILL DESTROY THAT ISLE...
...THAT ISLAND OF NEW BRITTANIA!
HE LIES, YOU KNOW.
...WHAT?
OBERLIEUTENANT DRACO. HE LIES. HE HATES THE ENGLISH...
...AND HIS HAND BRINGS THE WAR.
WHY TELL ME THIS, WOMAN?
BECAUSE I CAN SENSE...YOU ARE A MAN OF PEACE.
WE'VE LIVED IN WAR ALL OUR LIVES. AN ENTIRE GENERATION...
...THE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF A MAD HATRED...
...KILLING... AND BEING KILLED... FOR THEIR DEAD DREAMS.
BUT YOU... YOU'RE DIFFERENT.
7

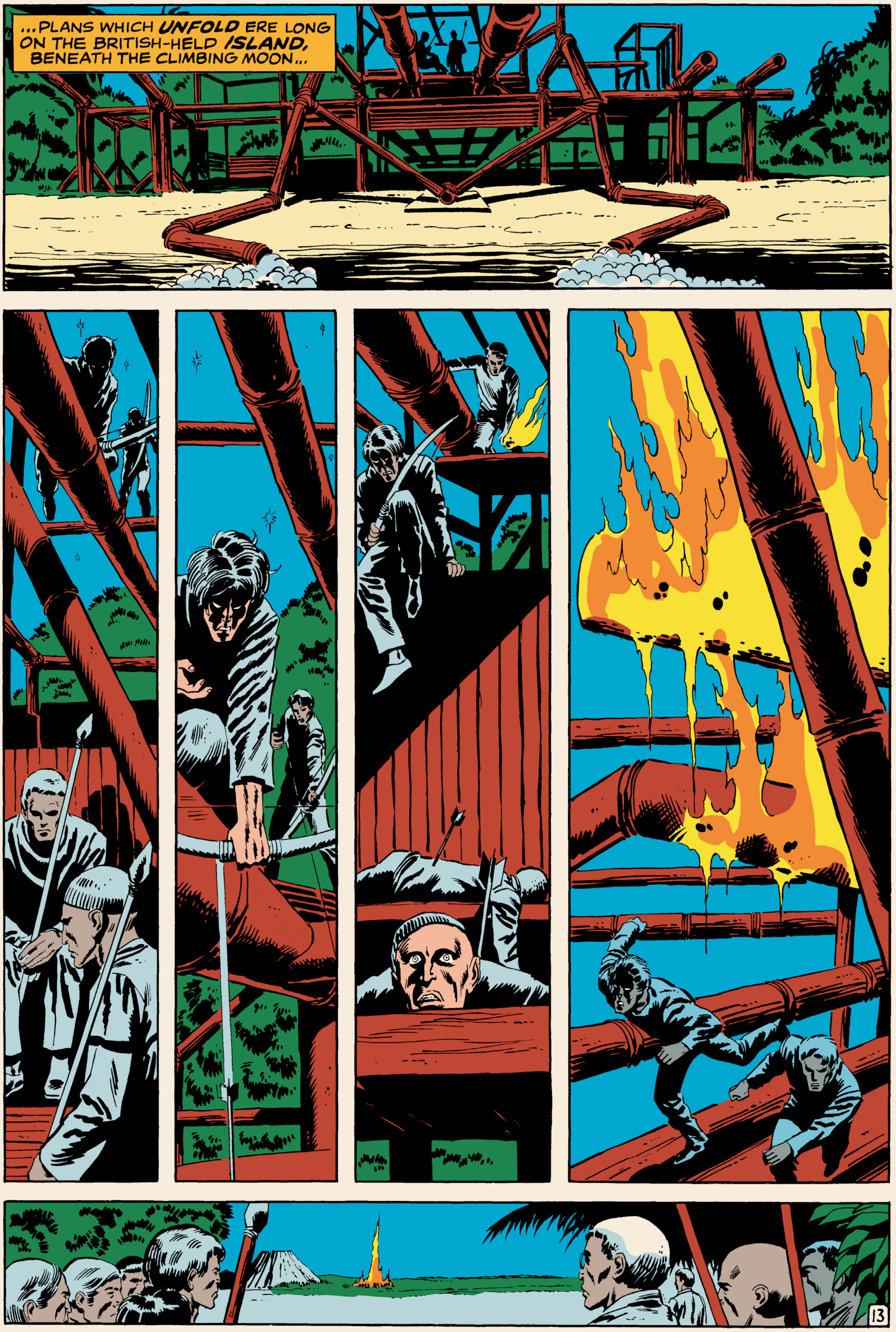

YOU'RE A GENTLE MAN, A MAN AT ONE WITH NATURE.
THERE ARE TOO FEW OF US, YOU KNOW. AND THEY WOULD HAVE US DIE.
AND YOU...?
WE ARE YOUNG. SHOULD WE CARE FOR THE INSANITIES OF THE PAST?
NO.
I LIKE YOU, GIRL. WALK WITH ME... AND TALK SOME MORE.
KA-ZAR IS UNKNOWING OF THE GLARING YOUNG MAN BEHIND THEM... DRACO'S SON, LOVER OF THE GIRL THE JUNGLE LORD IS WITH...
THE TWO OF THEM WALK IN SILENCE, WANDERING INLAND UNTIL...
RAAAARRRRR
BY THE TALONS OF TAJAK-- WHAT IS THIS PLACE, WOMAN?
THE CAVES OF NIGHT! I FORGOT THEM--!
WITHIN THERE DWELLS A MIGHTY MONSTER. NONE DARE ENTER THE CAVE, OR--
YOU'VE SAID ENOUGH, HEIDA!
--NOW THE SAVAGE DIES!
IT'S GERHAD-- DRACO'S SON--
TELL HIM THE REST, HEIDA!
--TELL HIM OF OUR LOVE!
LOVE--?
8

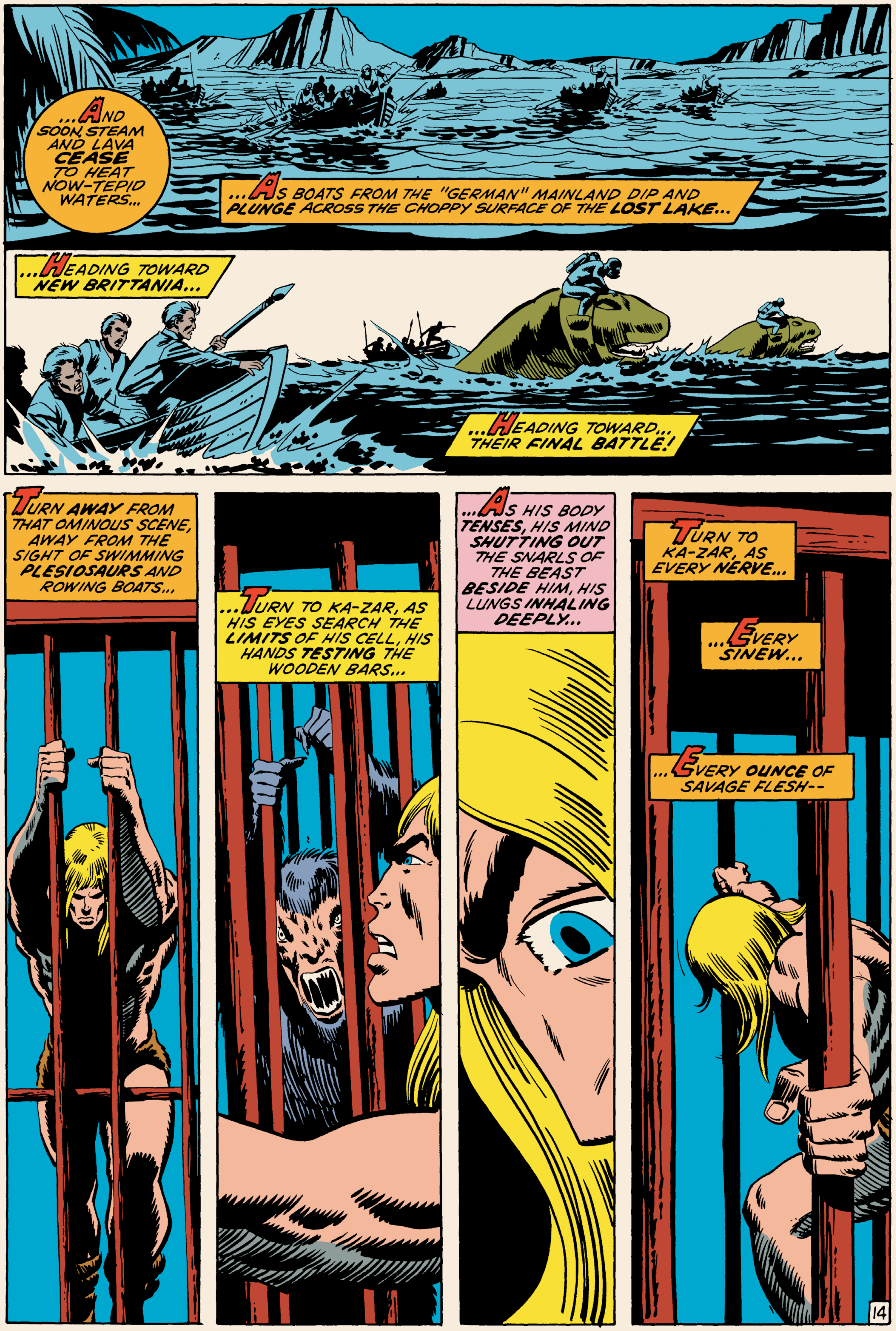

I KNEW NOTHING OF ANY LOVE, WOMAN. YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME.
BUT NOW-- IT DOES NOT MATTER MUCH, DOES IT?
WOK!
UNNNH!
KA-ZAR, I'M SORRY... I AM.
PERHAPS I WAS TESTING YOU... TO SEE IF YOU TRULY ARE A MAN OF PEACE.
YOU STRUCK IN SELF-DEFENSE, I KNOW.
BUT SOMEHOW, THIS TARNISHES YOUR IMAGE... DOES IT NOT?
I...I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY.
GODS!
ARE THEY ALL MAD? IS THIS WHAT COMES... OF THIRTY YEARS OF WAR?
EVERYONE DISTRUSTS. EVERYONE FIGHTS!
IS KA-ZAR THE ONLY ONE SANE?
THE JUNGLE FOREST PROVIDES NO ANSWER, AND SO THE WEARY KA-ZAR FINDS HIMSELF A TREE-TOP BED...
...AND THERE, SEEKS TO DROWN HIS CONCERNS IN THE SOOTHING WAVES OF SLEEP. HE RESTS 'TILL NIGHTFALL, WHEN...
LITTLE ONES, WHY DO YOU WAKE ME?
WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING FOR KA-ZAR TO SEE?
9

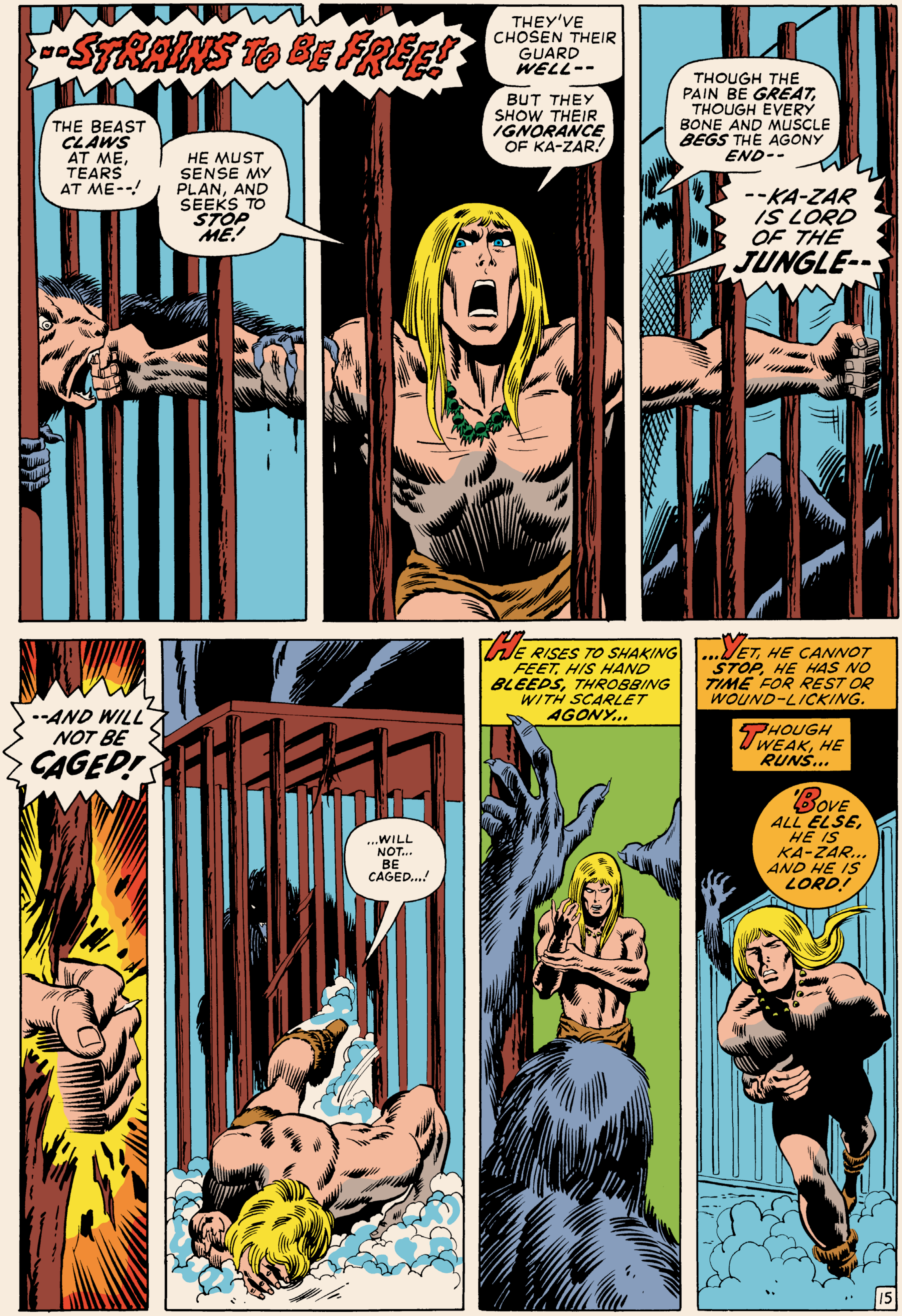

AHH, I HEAR IT, FRIENDS. FOOTSTEPS...
...THE TREAD OF BOOTED FEET.
AND YES, NOW I SEE THEM. THE MAN CALLED DRACO, AND TWO GUARDS.
WHAT'S THIS? THEY HEAD TOWARD THAT FORBIDDEN CAVE.
HMMM...I THINK IT'S TIME WE PARTED, LITTLE ONES...
...FOR NOW, KA-ZAR MUST MOVE ALONE.
SLIDING LIKE A SHADOW THRU THE SHADOWS, KA-ZAR FOLLOWS THE SILENT TRIO TO A MOONLIT CLEARING...
...AND THERE, TAKES UP A WARY VIGIL, WATCHING DRACO MOVE CLOSER TO THE CAVE...
...WATCHING AS...
'ERE, NOW, MATE... HOW'S THE OLD ARM, 'EY?
10

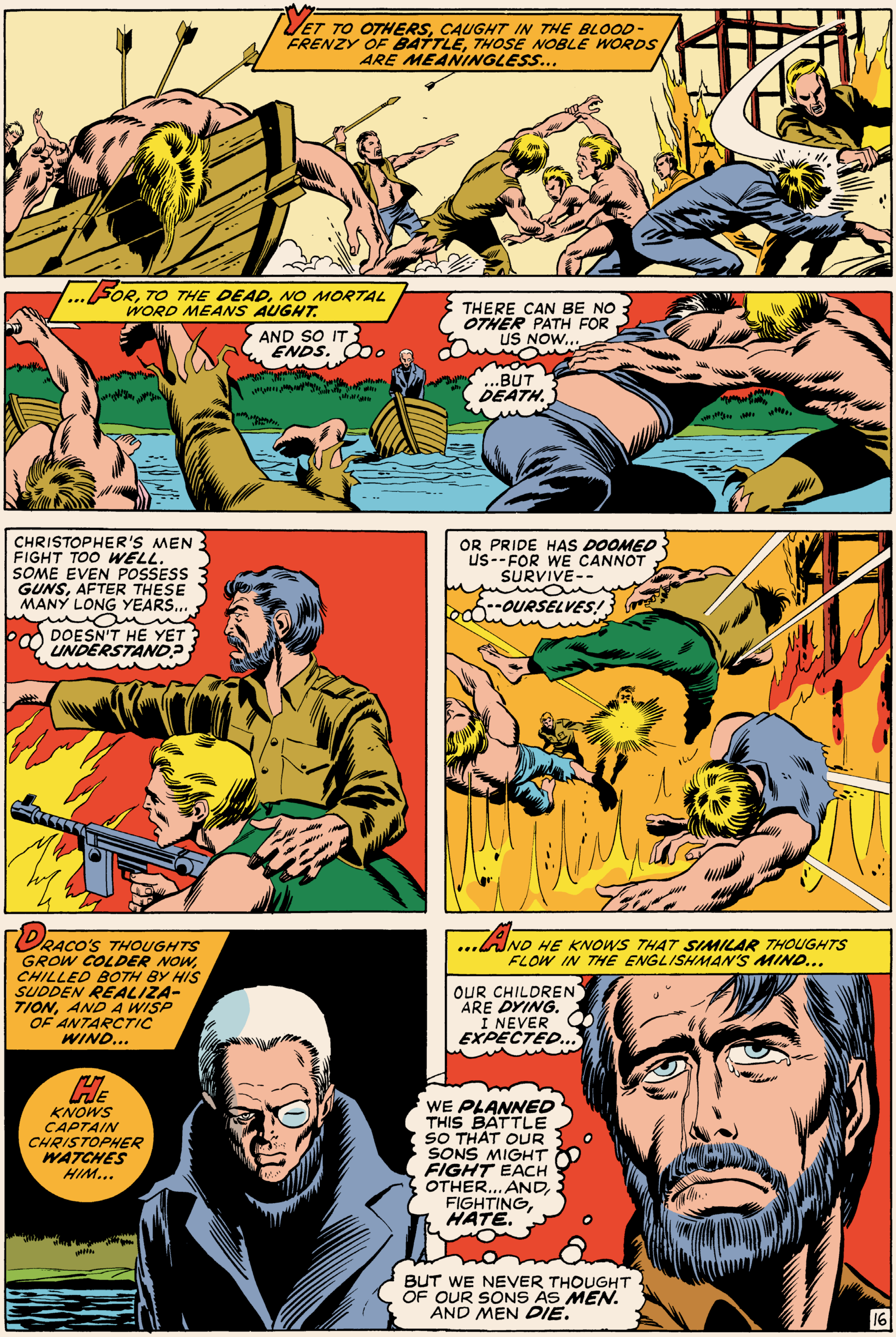

WELL ENOUGH, CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER. AND YOURSELF, MEIN HERR?
SURVIVIN', I DARE SAY. SO WHAT'S UP, DRACO?
WHY'D YOU CALL THIS MEETIN' SO SOON?
QUICKLY, DRACO EXPLAINS THE JUNGLE LORD'S SUDDEN APPEARANCE, AND THEN...
WELL, THE BLOKE'S SURE NOT ONE OF MY MEN, DRACO.
YOU THINK 'E'S FROM--OUTSIDE?
THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT I FEAR, CAPTAIN.
IF HE SPEAKS TO THE YOUNG ONES, TELLS THEM THE WAR IS TRULY OVER...
...OUR POWER... WILL COLLAPSE.
AYE... AND WE CAN'T 'AVE THAT, CAN WE?
I'VE A PAIR OF LADS MYSELF, HEINRICH. I WAS THINKIN' THE SAME THING...
SO PERHAPS WE SHOULD MOVE AHEAD WITH OUR PLANS...?
STRAINING FORWARD, KA-ZAR TRIES TO HEAR THE ENGLISHMAN'S ANSWER...
...AND INSTEAD, HEARS ONLY THE CRACKLING OF UNDERBRUSH SHORT YARDS BEHIND, AND THEN FEELS... THE MUZZLE OF A GUN!
AAAAAAAHHHH
HEINRICH! YOUR GUARD--!
SOMEONE WATCHES FROM THE BLUFF! YOU MEN--
11

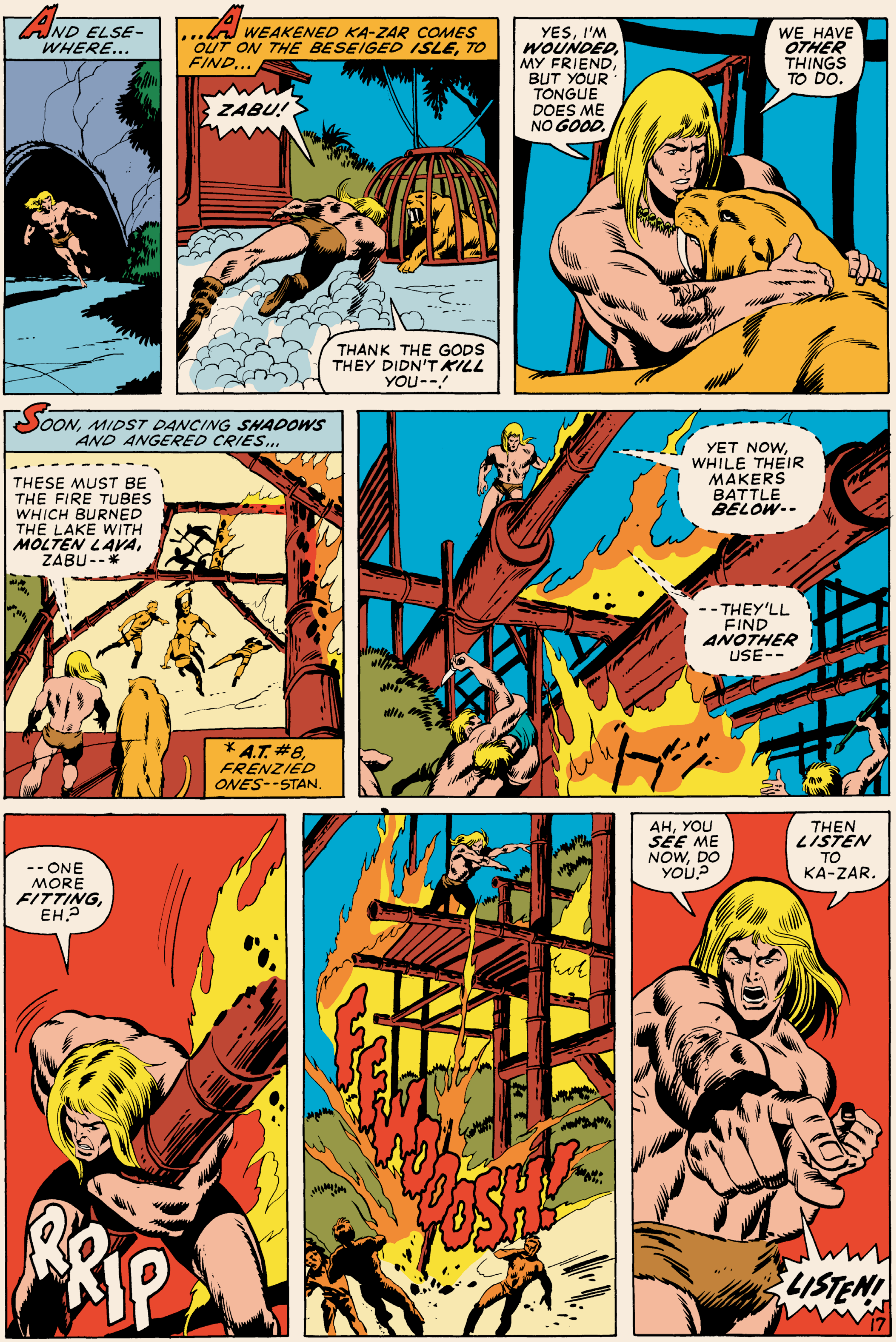

IT IS ALL RIGHT, MEIN OBERLIEUTENANT.
WE HAVE HIM.
SO...THIS IS YOUR SAVAGE, 'EY, 'EINRICH?
NOT 'ALF SO BAD IN THE FLESH, IS HE NOW? WHAT WILL WE DO WITH THE BLOKE...?
TAKE HIM INTO THE CAVE.
RRRRRRRRR
THE ROARING GROWS LOUDER, AND THE SKIN OF KA-ZAR'S NECK INVOLUNTARILY TIGHTENS...
RRRR
...UNTIL, IN A POOL OF FLICKERING TORCHLIGHT, HE SEES...
--CAGED?
RRRRRRRRR
OF COURSE, MEIN FREUND. IT KEEPS THE MORE CURIOUS OF OUR YOUNG FROM EXPLORING...
...AND PERHAPS DISCOVERING THIS TUNNEL WHICH CONNECTS NEW BRITTANIA TO THE MAINLAND...
...EVEN AS THE GOOD CAPTAIN AND I DID YEARS AGO.
QUITE IMPRESSIVE, IS HE NOT? THE LAST OF HIS KIND... A GIANT SMILODECTES, I BELIEVE.
THE OTHER CAGE WAS FOR HIS MATE...
...BUT SHE'S DEAD NOW, AND YOU MAY TAKE HER PLACE...!
HAHAHAHA
THE ECHOES RISE AND DIE IN BUT A MOMENT, AND KA-ZAR LISTENS TO THE BEAST'S ANSWERING GROWL, WONDERING AS TO THE NATURE OF THE PLANS THE TWO CONSPIRATORS HAD MENTIONED...
12.

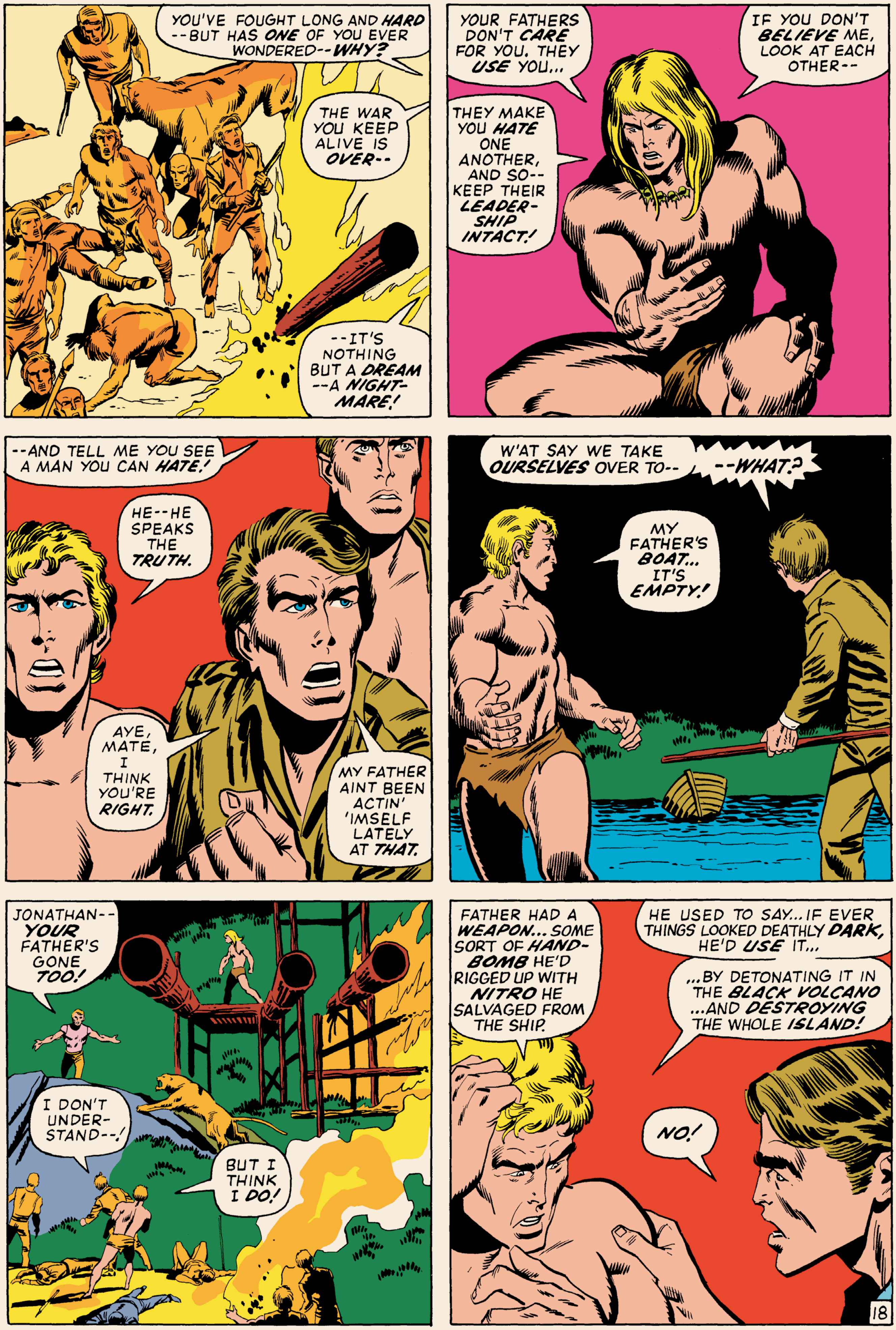

...PLANS WHICH UNFOLD ERE LONG ON THE BRITISH-HELD ISLAND, BENEATH THE CLIMBING MOON...
13

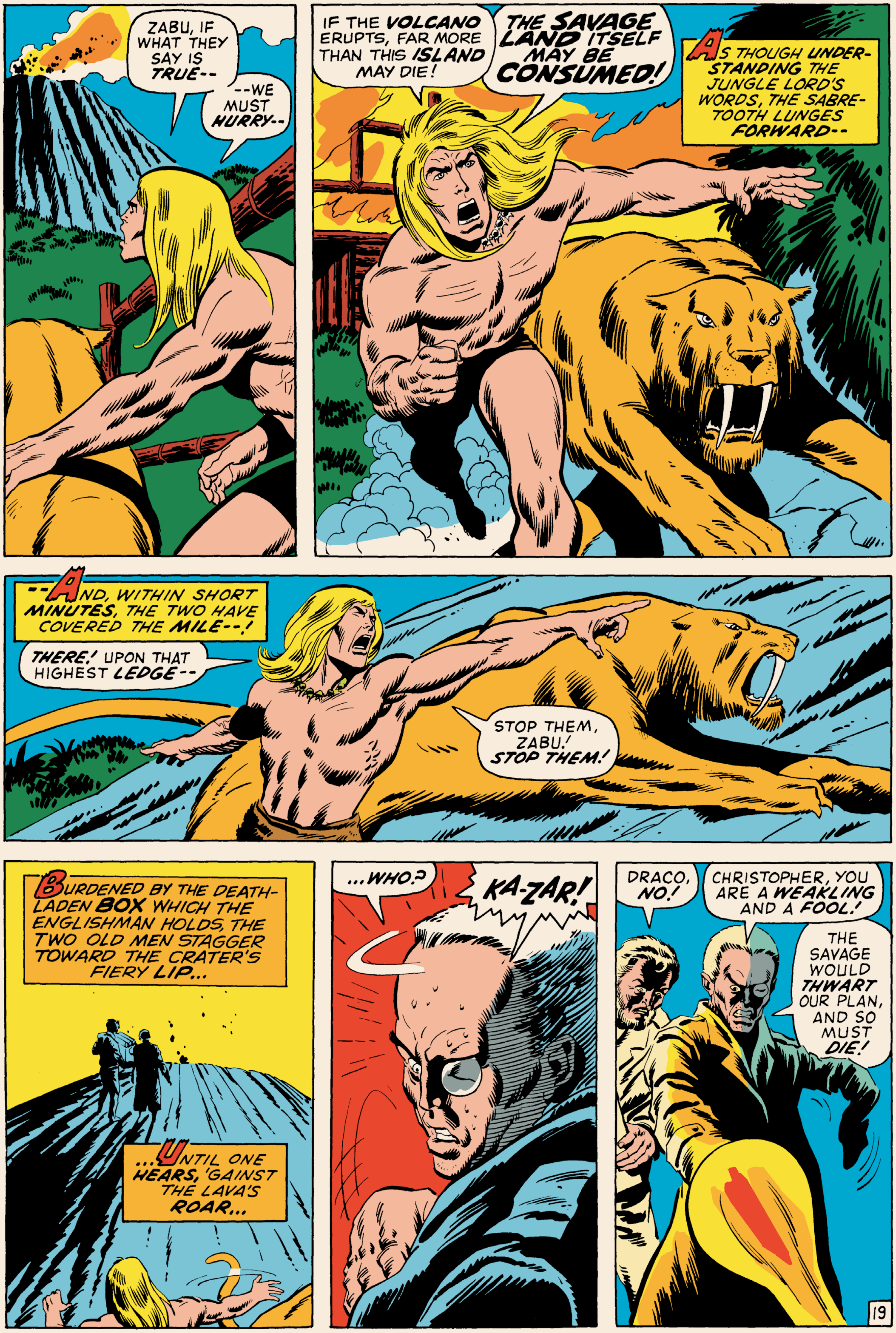

...And soon, steam and lava cease to heat now-tepid waters...
...As boats from the "German" mainland dip and plunge across the choppy surface of the Lost Lake...
...Heading toward New Brittania...
...Heading toward... their final battle!
Turn away from that ominous scene, away from the sight of swimming plesiosaurs and rowing boats...
...Turn to Ka-Zar, as his eyes search the limits of his cell, his hands testing the wooden bars...
...As his body tenses, his mind shutting out the snarls of the beast beside him, his lungs inhaling deeply...
Turn to Ka-Zar, as every nerve...
...Every sinew...
...Every ounce of savage flesh--
14

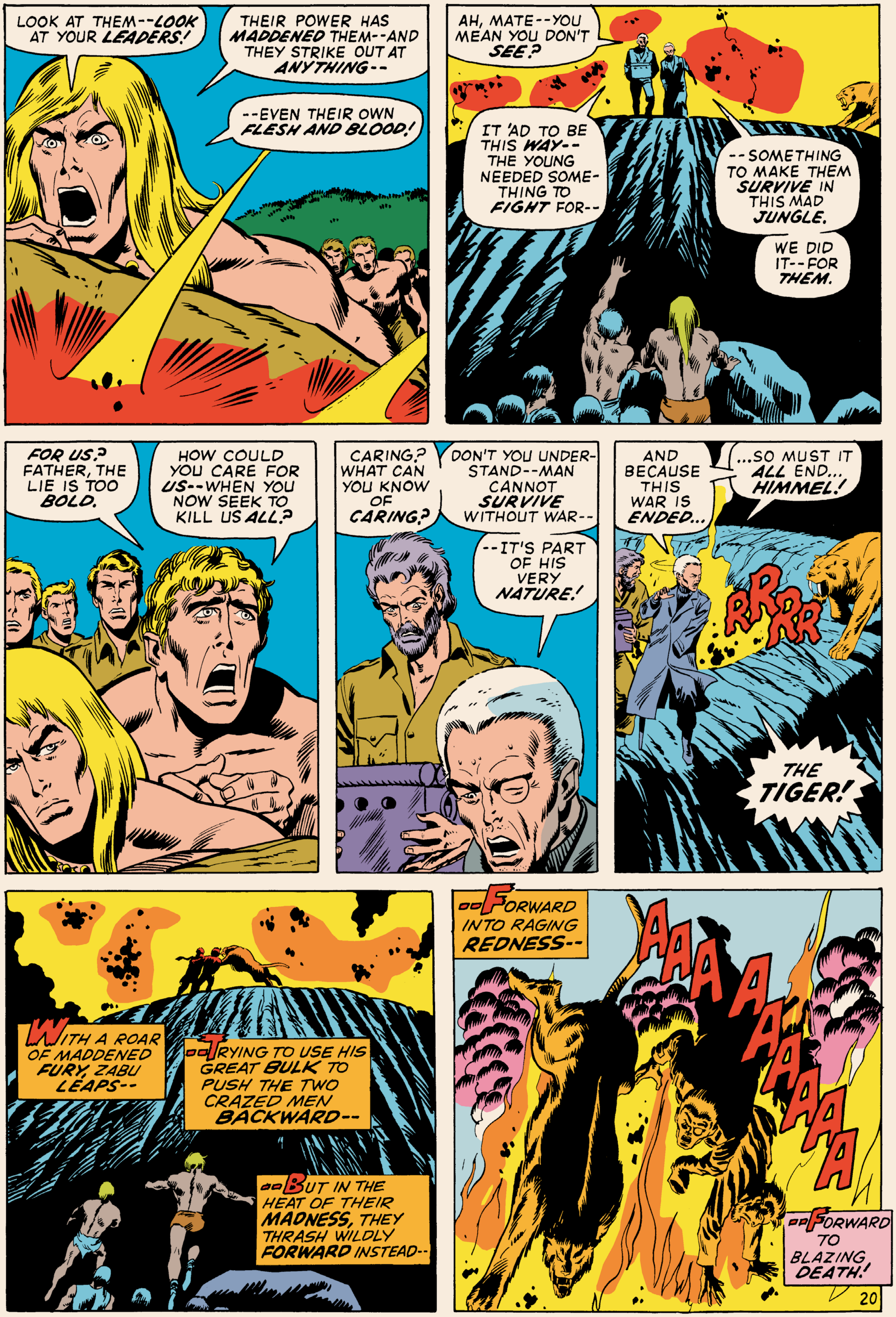

--STRAINS TO BE FREE!
THE BEAST CLAWS AT ME, TEARS AT ME--!
HE MUST SENSE MY PLAN, AND SEEKS TO STOP ME!
THEY'VE CHOSEN THEIR GUARD WELL--
BUT THEY SHOW THEIR IGNORANCE OF KA-ZAR!
THOUGH THE PAIN BE GREAT, THOUGH EVERY BONE AND MUSCLE BEGS THE AGONY END--
--KA-ZAR IS LORD OF THE JUNGLE--
--AND WILL NOT BE CAGED!
...WILL NOT... BE CAGED...!
HE RISES TO SHAKING FEET, HIS HAND BLEEDS, THROBBING WITH SCARLET AGONY...
...YET, HE CANNOT STOP, HE HAS NO TIME FOR REST OR WOUND-LICKING.
THOUGH WEAK, HE RUNS...
'BOVE ALL ELSE, HE IS KA-ZAR... AND HE IS LORD!
15

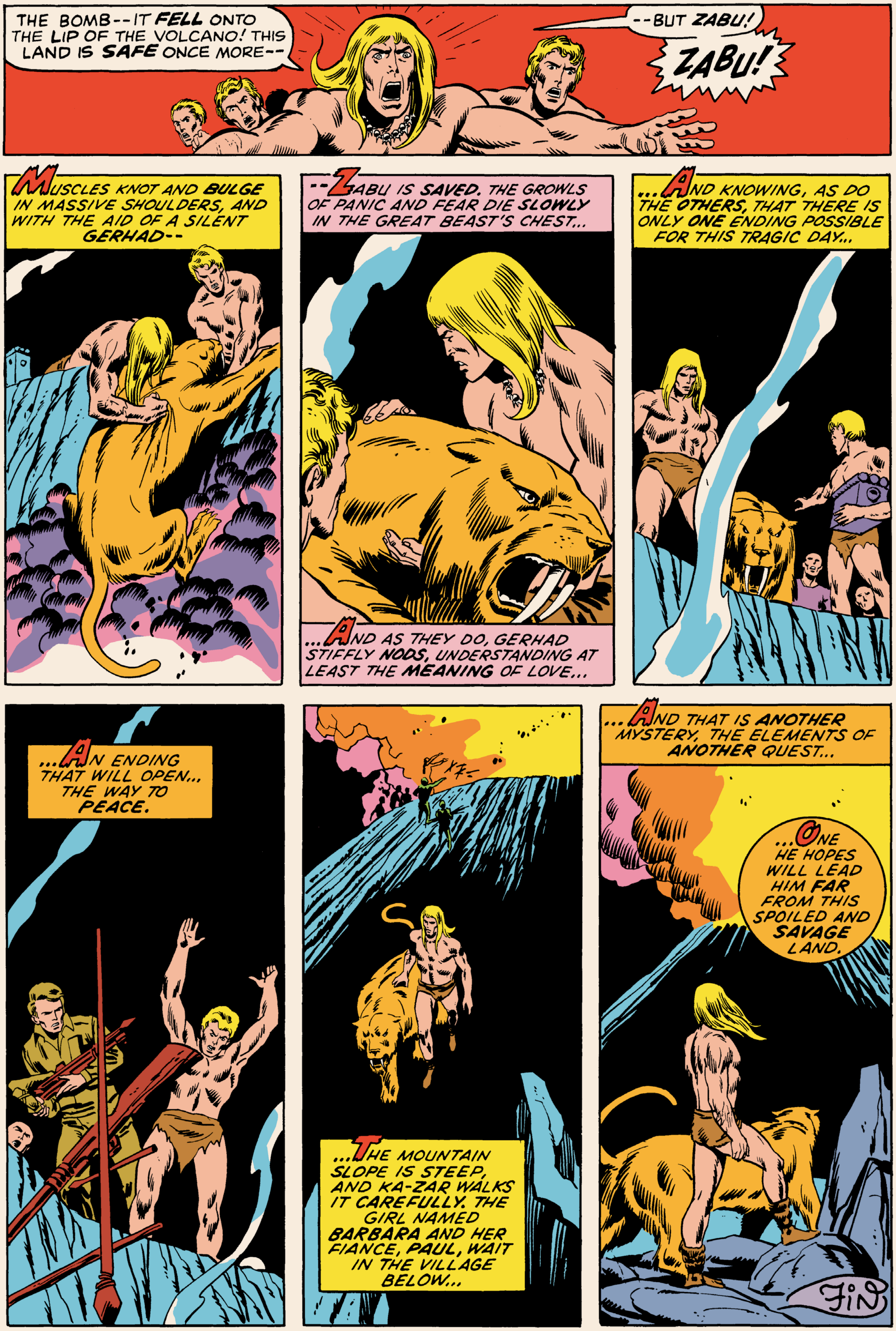

YET TO OTHERS, CAUGHT IN THE BLOOD-FRENZY OF BATTLE, THOSE NOBLE WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS...
...FOR, TO THE DEAD, NO MORTAL WORD MEANS AUGHT.
AND SO IT ENDS.
THERE CAN BE NO OTHER PATH FOR US NOW...
...BUT DEATH.
CHRISTOPHER'S MEN FIGHT TOO WELL. SOME EVEN POSSESS GUNS, AFTER THESE MANY LONG YEARS...
DOESN'T HE YET UNDERSTAND?
OR PRIDE HAS DOOMED US--FOR WE CANNOT SURVIVE--
--OURSELVES!
DRACO'S THOUGHTS GROW COLDER NOW, CHILLED BOTH BY HIS SUDDEN REALIZATION, AND A WISP OF ANTARCTIC WIND...
HE KNOWS CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER WATCHES HIM...
...AND HE KNOWS THAT SIMILAR THOUGHTS FLOW IN THE ENGLISHMAN'S MIND...
OUR CHILDREN ARE DYING. I NEVER EXPECTED...
WE PLANNED THIS BATTLE SO THAT OUR SONS MIGHT FIGHT EACH OTHER...AND, FIGHTING, HATE.
BUT WE NEVER THOUGHT OF OUR SONS AS MEN. AND MEN DIE.
16


AND ELSEWHERE...
...A WEAKENED KA-ZAR COMES OUT ON THE BESEIGED ISLE, TO FIND...
ZABU!
THANK THE GODS THEY DIDN'T KILL YOU--!
YES, I'M WOUNDED, MY FRIEND, BUT YOUR TONGUE DOES ME NO GOOD.
WE HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO.
SOON, MIDST DANCING SHADOWS AND ANGERED CRIES...
THESE MUST BE THE FIRE TUBES WHICH BURNED THE LAKE WITH MOLTEN LAVA, ZABU--*
* A.T. #8, FRENZIED ONES--STAN.
YET NOW, WHILE THEIR MAKERS BATTLE BELOW--
--THEY'LL FIND ANOTHER USE--
--ONE MORE FITTING, EH?
RRIP
FWOOSH!
AH, YOU SEE ME NOW, DO YOU?
THEN LISTEN TO KA-ZAR.
LISTEN!
17


YOU'VE FOUGHT LONG AND HARD --BUT HAS ONE OF YOU EVER WONDERED--WHY?
THE WAR YOU KEEP ALIVE IS OVER--
--IT'S NOTHING BUT A DREAM --A NIGHTMARE!
YOUR FATHERS DON'T CARE FOR YOU. THEY USE YOU...
THEY MAKE YOU HATE ONE ANOTHER, AND SO--KEEP THEIR LEADERSHIP INTACT!
IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, LOOK AT EACH OTHER--
--AND TELL ME YOU SEE A MAN YOU CAN HATE!
HE--HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
AYE, MATE, I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
MY FATHER AINT BEEN ACTIN' 'IMSELF LATELY AT THAT.
W'AT SAY WE TAKE OURSELVES OVER TO--
--WHAT?
MY FATHER'S BOAT... IT'S EMPTY!
JONATHAN--YOUR FATHER'S GONE TOO!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND--!
BUT I THINK I DO!
FATHER HAD A WEAPON... SOME SORT OF HAND-BOMB HE'D RIGGED UP WITH NITRO HE SALVAGED FROM THE SHIP.
HE USED TO SAY... IF EVER THINGS LOOKED DEATHLY DARK, HE'D USE IT...
...BY DETONATING IT IN THE BLACK VOLCANO ...AND DESTROYING THE WHOLE ISLAND!
NO!
18


ZABU, IF WHAT THEY SAY IS TRUE--
--WE MUST HURRY--
IF THE VOLCANO ERUPTS, FAR MORE THAN THIS ISLAND MAY DIE!
THE SAVAGE LAND ITSELF MAY BE CONSUMED!
AS THOUGH UNDERSTANDING THE JUNGLE LORD'S WORDS, THE SABRE-TOOTH LUNGES FORWARD--
--AND, WITHIN SHORT MINUTES, THE TWO HAVE COVERED THE MILE--!
THERE! UPON THAT HIGHEST LEDGE--
STOP THEM, ZABU! STOP THEM!
BURDENED BY THE DEATH-LADEN BOX WHICH THE ENGLISHMAN HOLDS, THE TWO OLD MEN STAGGER TOWARD THE CRATER'S FIERY LIP...
...UNTIL ONE HEARS, 'GAINST THE LAVA'S ROAR...
...WHO?
KA-ZAR!
DRACO, NO!
CHRISTOPHER, YOU ARE A WEAKLING AND A FOOL!
THE SAVAGE WOULD THWART OUR PLAN, AND SO MUST DIE!
19


LOOK AT THEM--LOOK AT YOUR LEADERS!
THEIR POWER HAS MADDENED THEM--AND THEY STRIKE OUT AT ANYTHING--
--EVEN THEIR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD!
AH, MATE--YOU MEAN YOU DON'T SEE?
IT 'AD TO BE THIS WAY--THE YOUNG NEEDED SOMETHING TO FIGHT FOR--
--SOMETHING TO MAKE THEM SURVIVE IN THIS MAD JUNGLE.
WE DID IT--FOR THEM.
FOR US? FATHER, THE LIE IS TOO BOLD.
HOW COULD YOU CARE FOR US--WHEN YOU NOW SEEK TO KILL US ALL?
CARING? WHAT CAN YOU KNOW OF CARING?
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND--MAN CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT WAR--
--IT'S PART OF HIS VERY NATURE!
AND BECAUSE THIS WAR IS ENDED...
...SO MUST IT ALL END... HIMMEL!
RRRRR
THE TIGER!
WITH A ROAR OF MADDENED FURY, ZABU LEAPS--
--TRYING TO USE HIS GREAT BULK TO PUSH THE TWO CRAZED MEN BACKWARD--
--BUT IN THE HEAT OF THEIR MADNESS, THEY THRASH WILDLY FORWARD INSTEAD--
--FORWARD INTO RAGING REDNESS--
AAAAAAAAAAA
--FORWARD TO BLAZING DEATH!
20


THE BOMB--IT FELL ONTO THE LIP OF THE VOLCANO! THIS LAND IS SAFE ONCE MORE--
--BUT ZABU!
ZABU!
MUSCLES KNOT AND BULGE IN MASSIVE SHOULDERS, AND WITH THE AID OF A SILENT GERHAD--
--ZABU IS SAVED. THE GROWLS OF PANIC AND FEAR DIE SLOWLY IN THE GREAT BEAST'S CHEST...
...AND AS THEY DO, GERHAD STIFFLY NODS, UNDERSTANDING AT LEAST THE MEANING OF LOVE...
...AND KNOWING, AS DO THE OTHERS, THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE ENDING POSSIBLE FOR THIS TRAGIC DAY...
...AN ENDING THAT WILL OPEN... THE WAY TO PEACE.
...THE MOUNTAIN SLOPE IS STEEP, AND KA-ZAR WALKS IT CAREFULLY. THE GIRL NAMED BARBARA AND HER FIANCE, PAUL, WAIT IN THE VILLAGE BELOW...
...AND THAT IS ANOTHER MYSTERY, THE ELEMENTS OF ANOTHER QUEST...
...ONE HE HOPES WILL LEAD HIM FAR FROM THIS SPOILED AND SAVAGE LAND.
FIN

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP, SECOND FLOOR, 625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N. Y. 10022

Gentlemen,

It is late at night, and here I sit before my typewriter. The wastebasket is filled with letters of comment on the subject of the 96th issue of the AVENGERS. Useless, all of them — useless.

I am, for the first time I can remember, at a loss for words. After having partaken of this monument to the ingenuity of Roy Thomas and Neal Adams, I can think of little to comment upon.

Never in the lengthy history of Timely/Marvel has such a breathtaking series been thrust upon the reading public. The most literate, stunning of its kind. Merely three issues ago the beginnings of this epic saw birth — now they come to fruition.

Such a macrocosmic conflict has rarely been seen — perhaps Edward Elmer Smith came closest to bringing this premise to perfection. Roy Thomas has done "Doc" one better. Indeed, this tale of galactic grandeur has opened an entirely different kind of "space warp" — one that the entire graphic field must needs follow.

Whether conceived originally as a magnificent experiment, or simply a stunning coalescence of characters into one munificent creation, it is of little consequence. Roy Thomas has created something totally unique — a book that appeals to all readers, on one level or another.

Oh to be sure, the issue is cliché-ridden — there isn't that much new material to work with — it just isn't there to capture. So the true touch of a genius is his/her ability to make stock situations seem *fresh* and original. An android in love? Nothing new — but yet the circumstances prevail upon one's senses to weave a path which has yet to be explored.

Then there's Henry Pym. What awaits him? Or Clint Barton? Man who was once a giant — now little more than a human slave. The possibilities are frankly endless. Mar-Vell, man of the Kree — he too plays an integral part in this vast, all-encompassing war.

And so I sign off — having said little more than is immediately evident to the discerning reader. I had to — there was so *much* to be said — and even so I barely scratched the surface. And, all told, it's really a pity that next issue we will have to see the finish of this narrative experience.

The graphic story has been given new purpose, new direction — indeed, a new birth. Many thanks, gentlemen, for a job well done.

Matt Graham, 10442 Monogram Ave.
Granada Hills, Calif.

Your wondrous words, Matt, were written a few weeks before the star-studded wind-up to the Skrull/Kree War in issue #97. All that Roy and Neal can say — in humble acknowledgement of your praise — is that they hope that their conception of the ultimate resolvement of the War held to the high standards you feel the previous issues had established. (For, 'twas of course Roy and Neal who conceived and co-plotted that final issue, even though circumstances decreed at last that Big John Buscema undertake the gargantuan task of actually *drawing* that final, decisive segment.)

As to how the Olympus segment culminating in this 100th issue compares to that nine-part wonder — well, that's something we'll have to let you frantic ones decide. We just keep churning 'em out, with a combination of inspiration and perspiration; the final verdict is up to Marveldom Assembled!

Dear Stan and Roy,

It has been over seven years since I last wrote a letter to you concerning the AVENGERS, but the direction of the comic's editorial policy over the past few years, capped by issue #96, has finally prompted me to write.

Frankly, this is a gripe letter dealing with two obvious trends within the magazine, the first being the avalanche of guest stars you are swamping the comic with. Do you realize that in almost three years (ever since #66) there have only been three issues of the AVENGERS (#'s 73, 74, & 77) that did not have at least one guest star?! Don't get me wrong. Guest stars are okay, taken in moderation. I could probably stand a guest star as often as every other issue, but when you feature a *gang* of guest stars *every* issue, things tend to get out of hand. And it is a gang, too. It seems that everytime I open an issue of AVENGERS, Thor, Iron Man, and Cap are guest-starring together, and usually to the exclusion of the full-time Avengers. If this keeps up, you might as well change the name of the book to "The Army of Super-Heroes." Do you realize that Iron Man has never, I repeat, *never,* taken an active role in an AVENGERS saga unless Thor was also on hand? I've heard of togetherness, but this is ridiculous!

My second gripe concerns the criminal conspiracy to ignore Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch. (These two are my favorites, so my views are not exactly unprejudiced.) In the long history of the Avengers, these two characters have never starred in a story unless you were getting rid of them (#47) or bringing them back (#75-76). Only these two are so callously neglected in this way. The other Avengers are not, for they have all starred, or been featured prominently, in issues wherein they were not leaving or rejoining the group.

Partly because of stories featuring other Avengers and partly because of the flood of guest stars, Wanda and Pietro have been shoved into the background. Now you have them sleeping through four or five issues on the Skrull planet while the other Avengers (and the inevitable guest stars) hog the limelight. When I first heard that Neal Adams was taking over as AVENGERS artist, I said, "Whoopie. Finally Wanda will be drawn as she should be." But what happens? Nothing. In the last three issues, Wanda and Pietro have been drawn by Adams in five measly panels. I give up.

Before I close this rather lengthy letter, I have a few choice comments on this romance you have brewing between Wanda and the Vision. Please make up your minds who you are going to pair her off with. First you entertained ideas of getting something going between her and Sub-Mariner, then it was Cap, which was followed by Hercules, Arkon, and now the Vison. I myself would like to see something grow between her and the Black Knight. However, I suppose I should count my blessings and be thankful that you haven't stuck her with that lumbering Goliath.

I know this letter has been one long complaint, but if I didn't like THE AVENGERS so much, I wouldn't have gone to the trouble to write it.

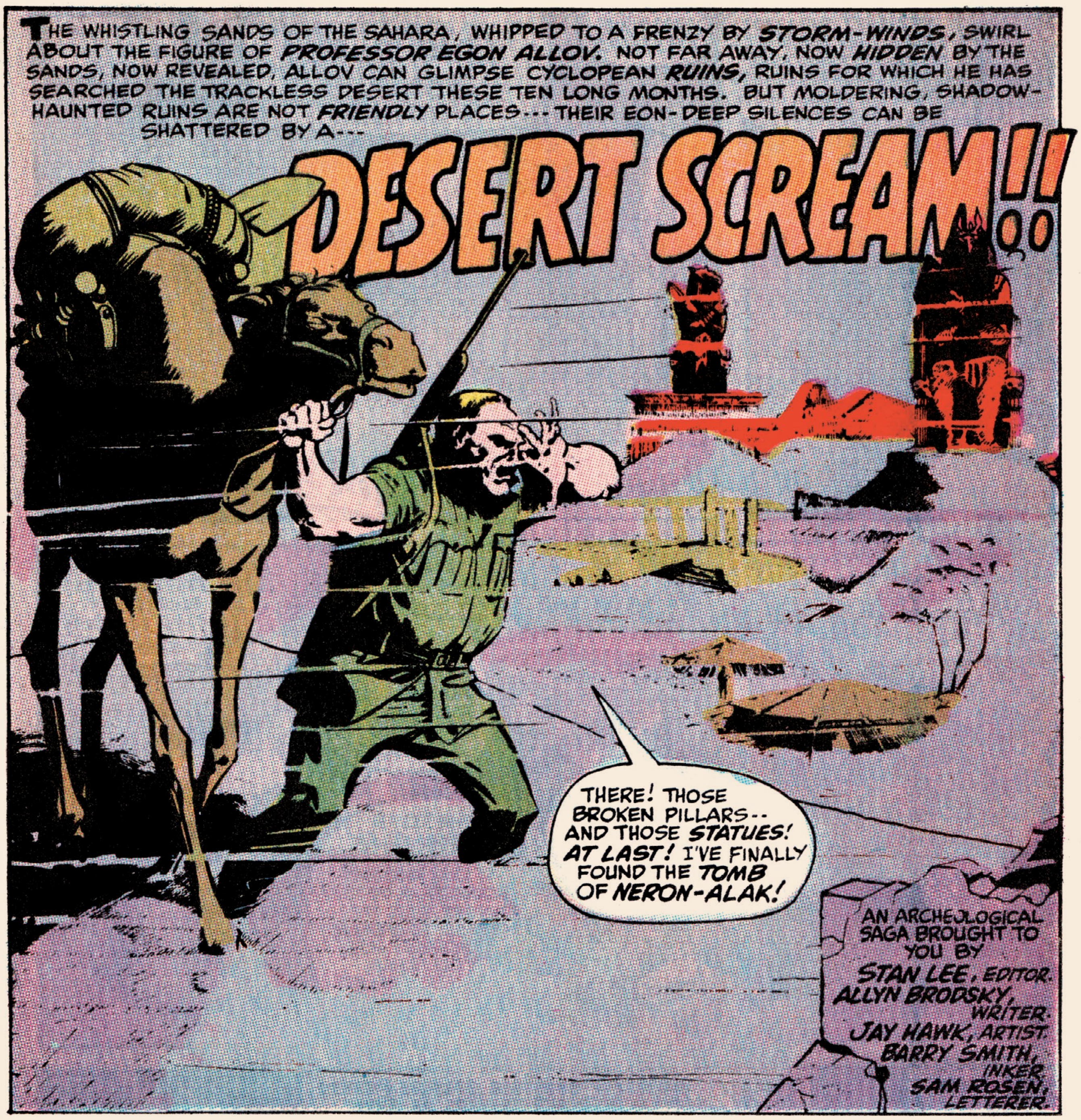
Ronnie S. Randles, Box 63
Sevierville, Tenn. 37862

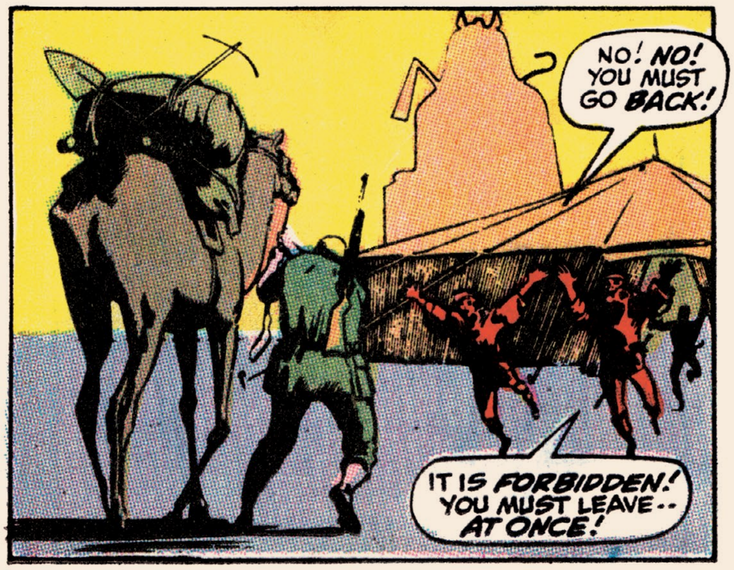
Ronnie, since recent or near-future issues take care of most of the cogent points raised by your letter, we think we'll just deal with the first part of it and let your fellow Avengerophiles take care of answering the others, whether pro or con, okay?

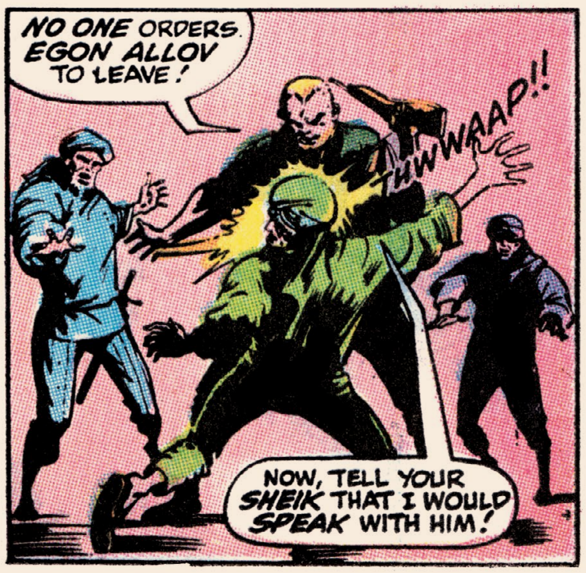
We've got to admit that we — or at least Roy, who's been handling THE AVENGERS ever since issue #35, 'way back when — have a basic, if friendly, disagreement with you on the matter of "guest stars." As we've no doubt stated before, we don't consider Cap, Thor, and Iron Man to be guest stars in any sense of the word; they're Avengers, pure and simple, who have returned to harness in recent months. It was these three, with the aid of Giant-Man and the Wasp (and maybe the Hulk), who gave THE AVENGERS some of their greatest moments in the early days of the mag, and Roy'd been chafing at the bit to bring them back as fulltime Avengers ever since the day he first took over scripting chores.

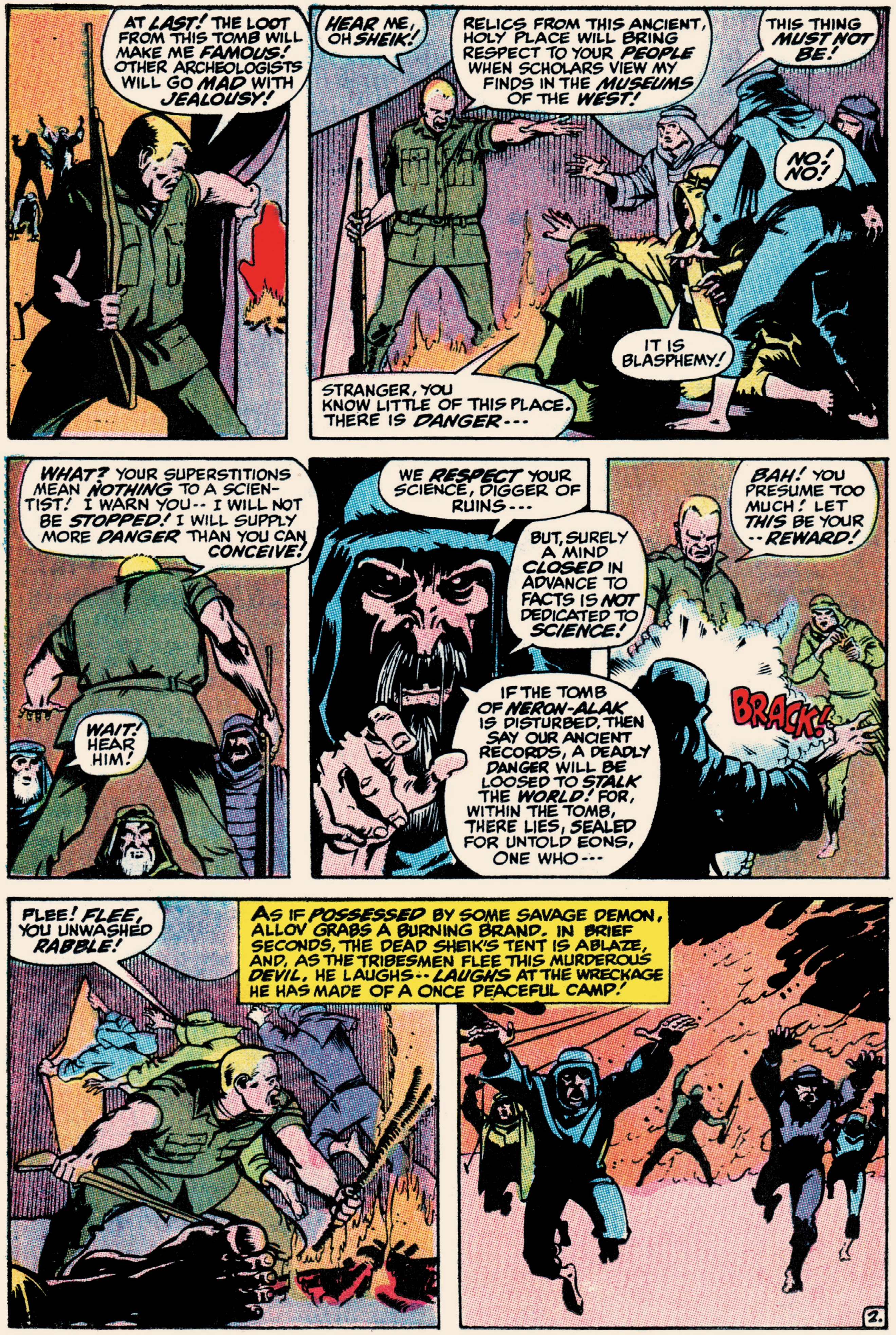
In addition, we've been inundated for years with a tidal wave of mail which begged, pleaded, *demanded* that we restore that titanic triumvirate to full service — so it was probably inevitable that we do so sooner or later. And when our rascally writer's personal wishes coincide with a mass of mail like that — what more can we ask?

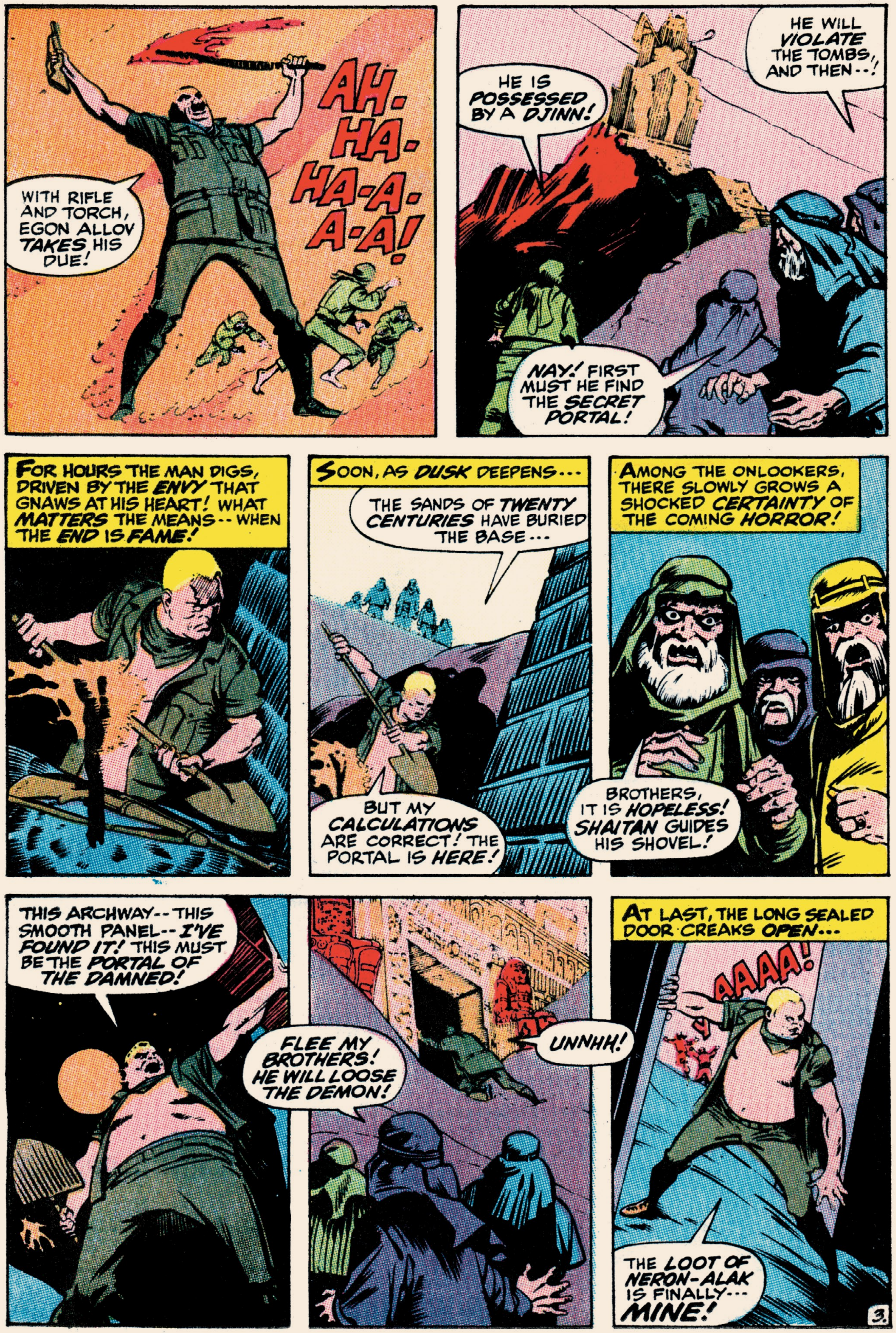
You really intrigued us, though, by being the first person ever to point out that Iron Man had never appeared in an issue unless Thor did, too! If you're right, it's sheer coincidence — but a real gasser of one! We'll have to remedy that situation one of these days — if only to establish another mighty Marvel first! 'Nuff said? If not — you know where to reach us, effendi!

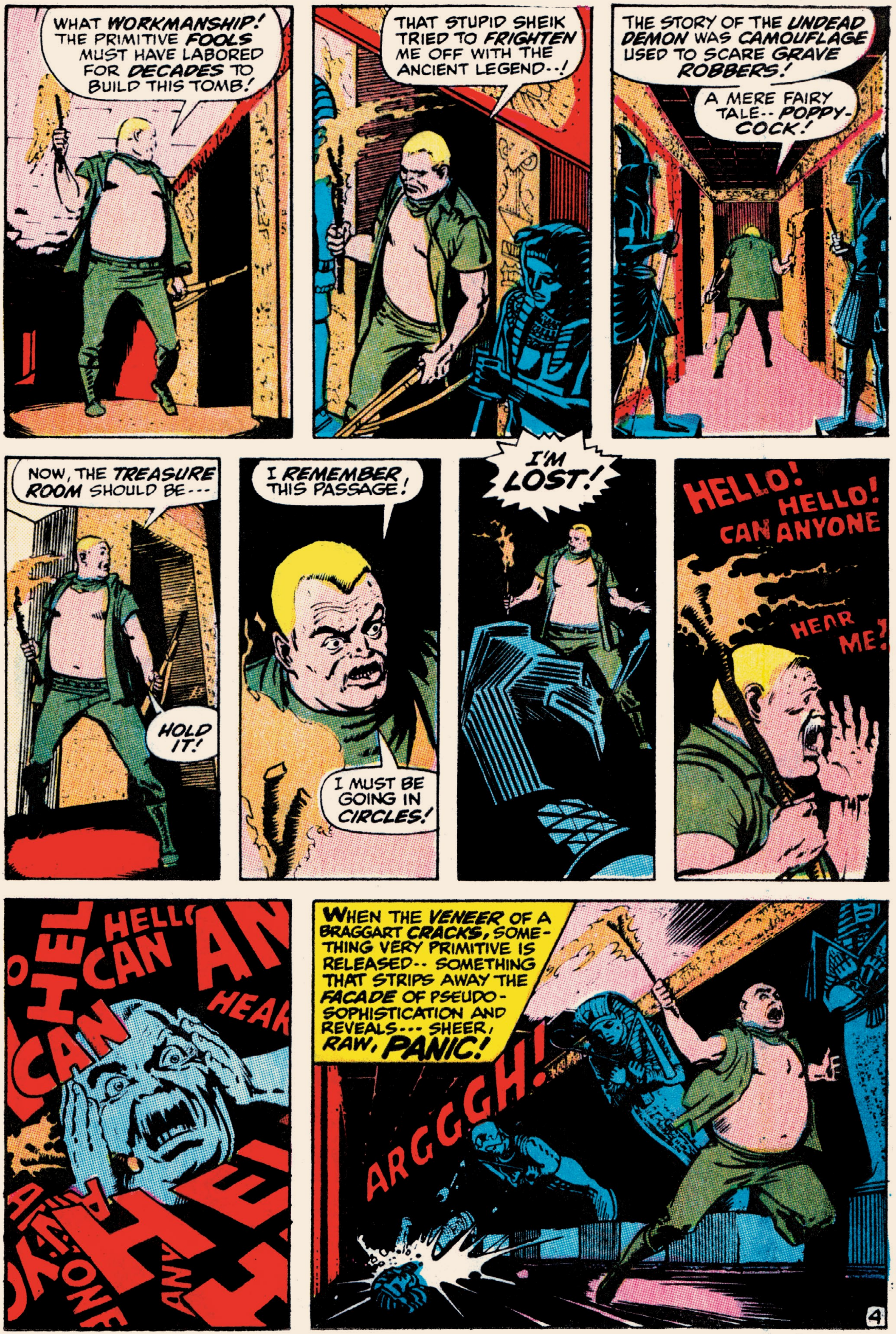

THE WHISTLING SANDS OF THE SAHARA, WHIPPED TO A FRENZY BY STORM-WINDS, SWIRL ABOUT THE FIGURE OF PROFESSOR EGON ALLOV. NOT FAR AWAY, NOW HIDDEN BY THE SANDS, NOW REVEALED, ALLOV CAN GLIMPSE CYCLOPEAN RUINS, RUINS FOR WHICH HE HAS SEARCHED THE TRACKLESS DESERT THESE TEN LONG MONTHS. BUT MOLDERING, SHADOW-HAUNTED RUINS ARE NOT FRIENDLY PLACES--- THEIR EON-DEEP SILENCES CAN BE SHATTERED BY A---
DESERT SCREAM!!
THERE! THOSE BROKEN PILLARS-- AND THOSE STATUES! AT LAST! I'VE FINALLY FOUND THE TOMB OF NERON-ALAK!
AN ARCHEOLOGICAL SAGA BROUGHT TO YOU BY STAN LEE, EDITOR. ALLYN BRODSKY, WRITER. JAY HAWK, ARTIST. BARRY SMITH, INKER. SAM ROSEN, LETTERER.

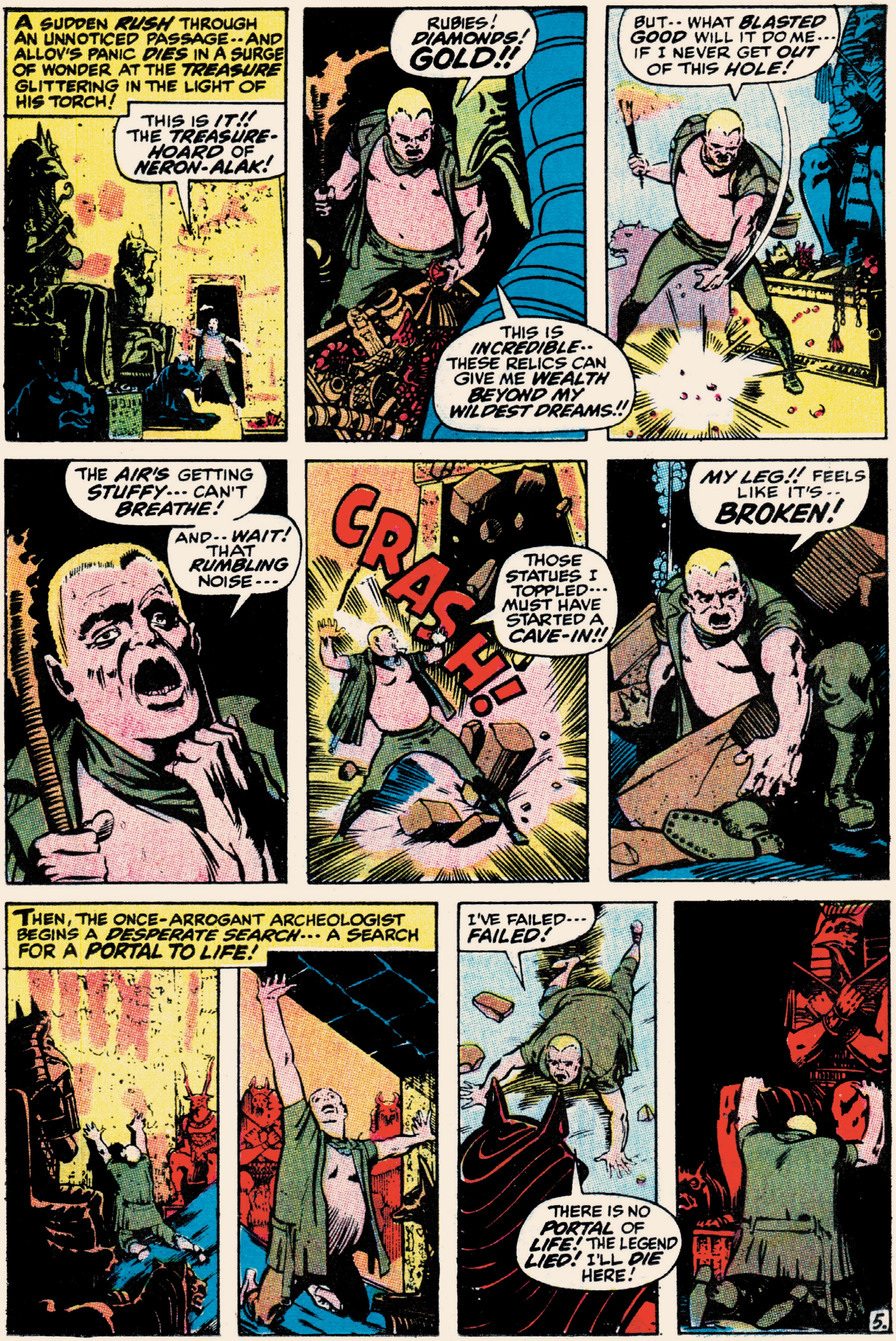

NO! NO! YOU MUST GO BACK!
IT IS FORBIDDEN! YOU MUST LEAVE-- AT ONCE!

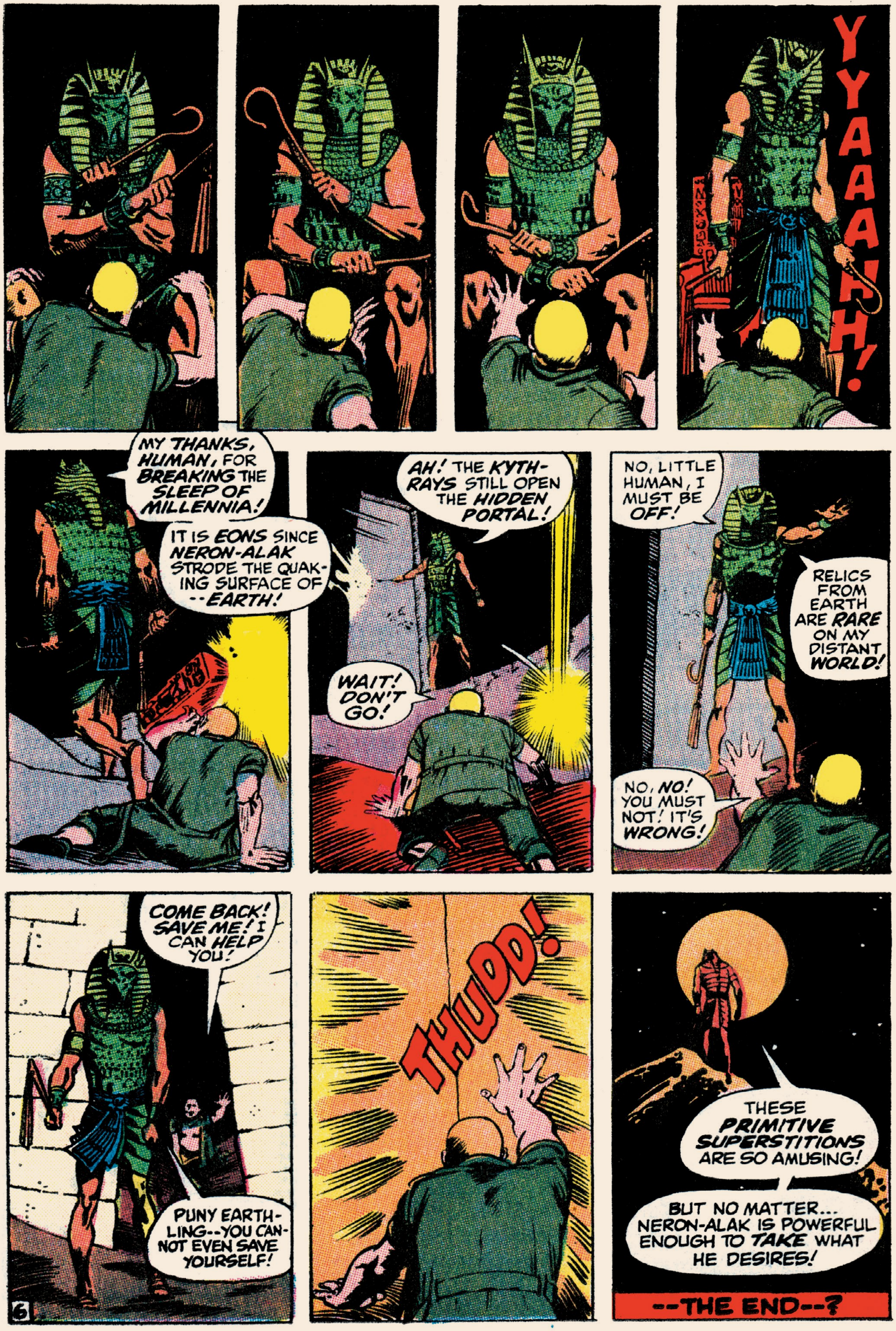

NO ONE ORDERS EGON ALLOV TO LEAVE!
THWWRAAP!!
NOW, TELL YOUR SHEIK THAT I WOULD SPEAK WITH HIM!

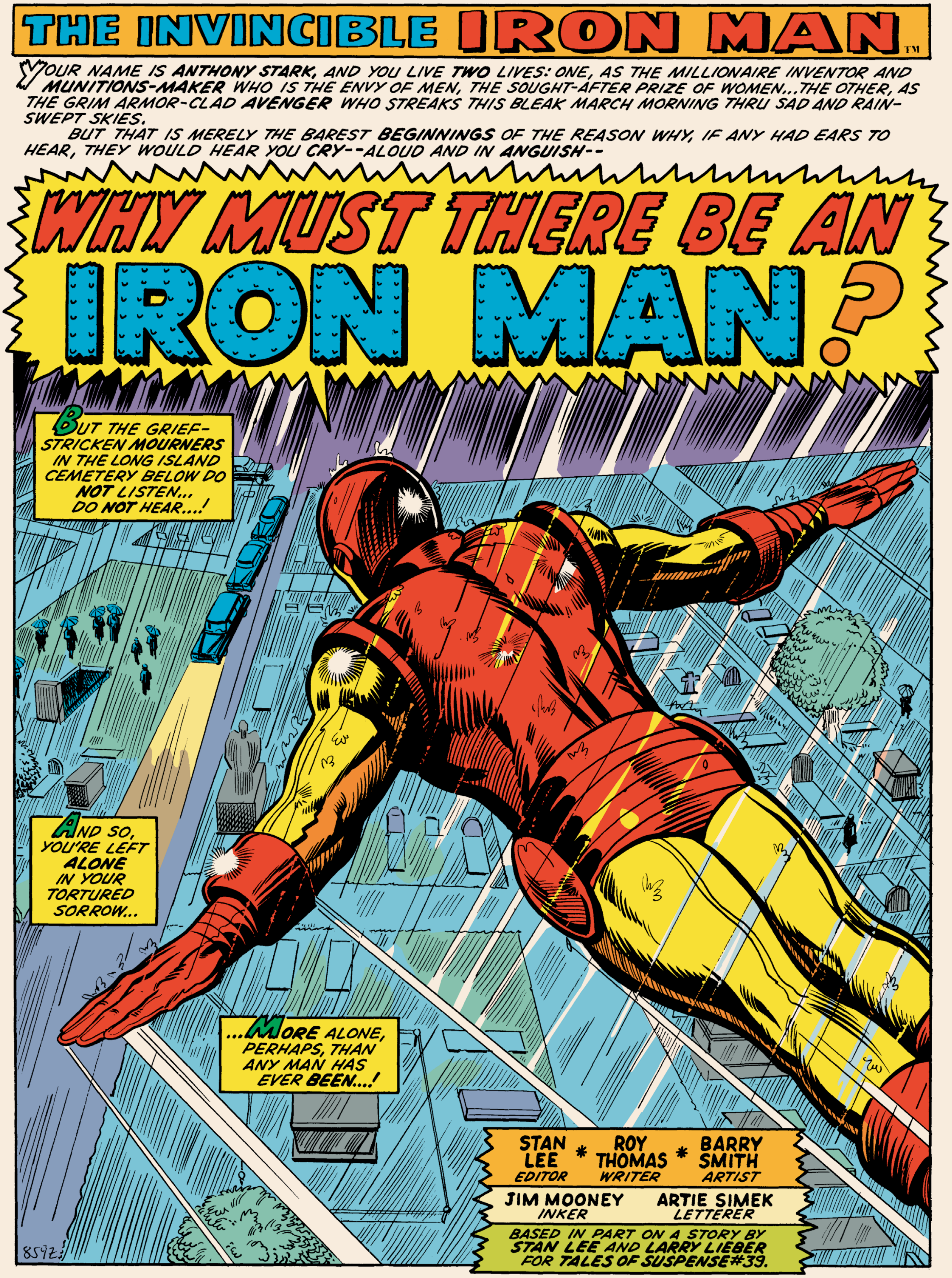

AT LAST! THE LOOT FROM THIS TOMB WILL MAKE ME FAMOUS! OTHER ARCHEOLOGISTS WILL GO MAD WITH JEALOUSY!
HEAR ME, OH SHEIK!
RELICS FROM THIS ANCIENT, HOLY PLACE WILL BRING RESPECT TO YOUR PEOPLE WHEN SCHOLARS VIEW MY FINDS IN THE MUSEUMS OF THE WEST!
THIS THING MUST NOT BE!
NO! NO!
IT IS BLASPHEMY!
STRANGER, YOU KNOW LITTLE OF THIS PLACE. THERE IS DANGER---
WHAT? YOUR SUPERSTITIONS MEAN NOTHING TO A SCIENTIST! I WARN YOU-- I WILL NOT BE STOPPED! I WILL SUPPLY MORE DANGER THAN YOU CAN CONCEIVE!
WAIT! HEAR HIM!
WE RESPECT YOUR SCIENCE, DIGGER OF RUINS---
BUT, SURELY A MIND CLOSED IN ADVANCE TO FACTS IS NOT DEDICATED TO SCIENCE!
IF THE TOMB OF NERON-ALAK IS DISTURBED, THEN SAY OUR ANCIENT RECORDS, A DEADLY DANGER WILL BE LOOSED TO STALK THE WORLD! FOR, WITHIN THE TOMB, THERE LIES, SEALED FOR UNTOLD EONS, ONE WHO---
BAH! YOU PRESUME TOO MUCH! LET THIS BE YOUR --REWARD!
BRACK!
FLEE! FLEE, YOU UNWASHED RABBLE!
AS IF POSSESSED BY SOME SAVAGE DEMON, ALLOV GRABS A BURNING BRAND. IN BRIEF SECONDS, THE DEAD SHEIK'S TENT IS ABLAZE, AND, AS THE TRIBESMEN FLEE THIS MURDEROUS DEVIL, HE LAUGHS-- LAUGHS AT THE WRECKAGE HE HAS MADE OF A ONCE PEACEFUL CAMP!
2.

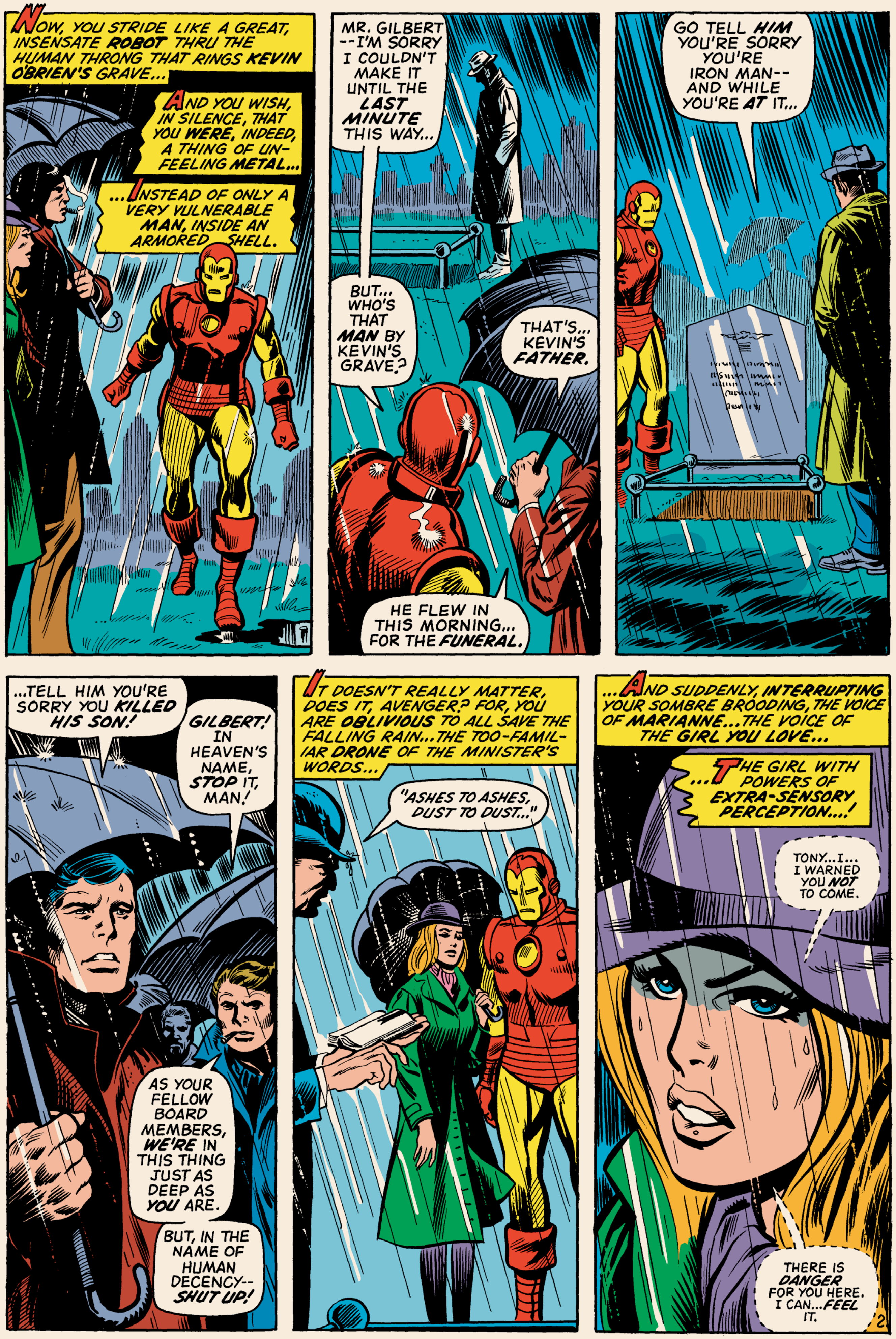

AH-HA-HA-A-A-A-A!
WITH RIFLE AND TORCH, EGON ALLOV TAKES HIS DUE!
HE IS POSSESSED BY A DJINN!
HE WILL VIOLATE THE TOMBS, AND THEN--!
NAY! FIRST MUST HE FIND THE SECRET PORTAL!
FOR HOURS THE MAN DIGS, DRIVEN BY THE ENVY THAT GNAWS AT HIS HEART! WHAT MATTERS THE MEANS-- WHEN THE END IS FAME!
SOON, AS DUSK DEEPENS...
THE SANDS OF TWENTY CENTURIES HAVE BURIED THE BASE...
BUT MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT! THE PORTAL IS HERE!
AMONG THE ONLOOKERS, THERE SLOWLY GROWS A SHOCKED CERTAINTY OF THE COMING HORROR!
BROTHERS, IT IS HOPELESS! SHAITAN GUIDES HIS SHOVEL!
THIS ARCHWAY-- THIS SMOOTH PANEL-- I'VE FOUND IT! THIS MUST BE THE PORTAL OF THE DAMNED!
FLEE MY BROTHERS! HE WILL LOOSE THE DEMON!
UNNHH!
AT LAST, THE LONG SEALED DOOR CREAKS OPEN...
AAAA!
THE LOOT OF NERON-ALAK IS FINALLY... MINE!
3.

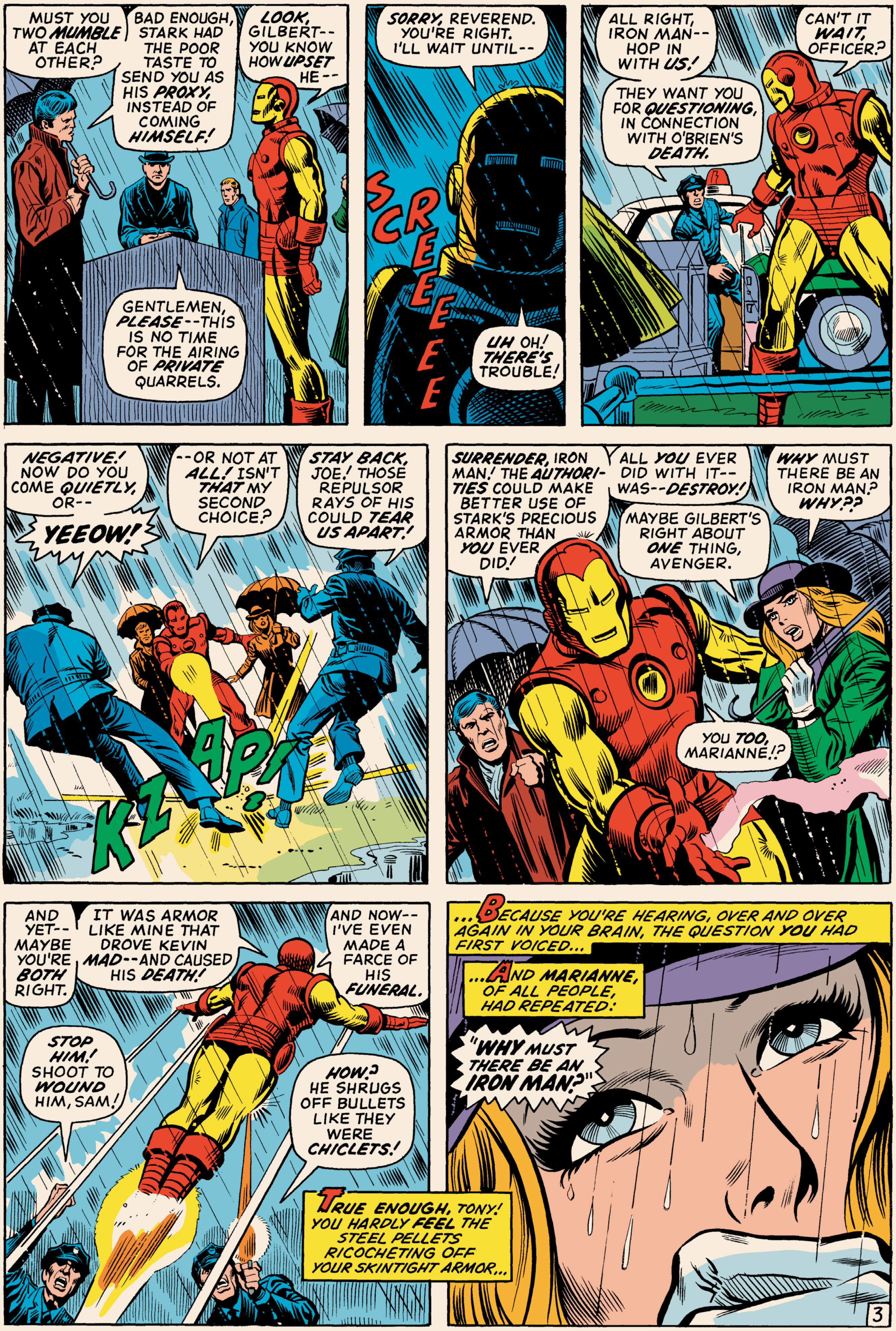

WHAT WORKMANSHIP! THE PRIMITIVE FOOLS MUST HAVE LABORED FOR DECADES TO BUILD THIS TOMB!
THAT STUPID SHEIK TRIED TO FRIGHTEN ME OFF WITH THE ANCIENT LEGEND--!
THE STORY OF THE UNDEAD DEMON WAS CAMOUFLAGE USED TO SCARE GRAVE ROBBERS!
A MERE FAIRY TALE-- POPPYCOCK!
NOW, THE TREASURE ROOM SHOULD BE---
HOLD IT!
I REMEMBER THIS PASSAGE!
I MUST BE GOING IN CIRCLES!
I'M LOST!
HELLO! HELLO! CAN ANYONE HEAR ME?
HEL
HELLO
CAN
AN
HEAR
CAN
ANYONE
WHEN THE VENEER OF A BRAGGART CRACKS, SOMETHING VERY PRIMITIVE IS RELEASED-- SOMETHING THAT STRIPS AWAY THE FACADE OF PSEUDO-SOPHISTICATION AND REVEALS... SHEER, RAW, PANIC!
ARGGGH!
4

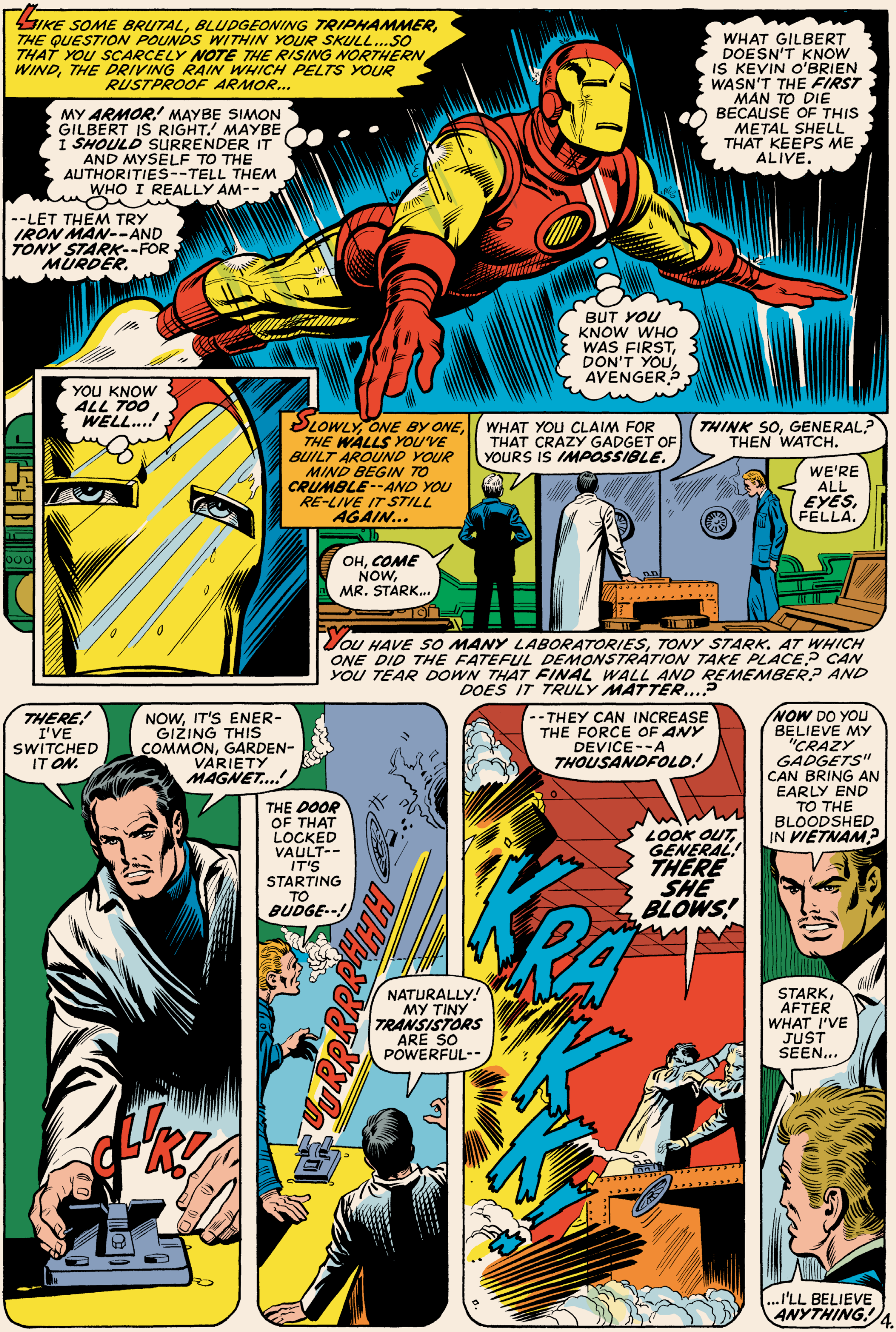

A SUDDEN RUSH THROUGH AN UNNOTICED PASSAGE--AND ALLOV'S PANIC DIES IN A SURGE OF WONDER AT THE TREASURE GLITTERING IN THE LIGHT OF HIS TORCH!
THIS IS IT!! THE TREASURE-HOARD OF NERON-ALAK!
RUBIES! DIAMONDS! GOLD!!
THIS IS INCREDIBLE.. THESE RELICS CAN GIVE ME WEALTH BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS!!
BUT-- WHAT BLASTED GOOD WILL IT DO ME... IF I NEVER GET OUT OF THIS HOLE!
THE AIR'S GETTING STUFFY--- CAN'T BREATHE!
AND-- WAIT! THAT RUMBLING NOISE---
CRASH!
THOSE STATUES I TOPPLED--- MUST HAVE STARTED A CAVE-IN!!
MY LEG!! FEELS LIKE IT'S-- BROKEN!
THEN, THE ONCE-ARROGANT ARCHEOLOGIST BEGINS A DESPERATE SEARCH--- A SEARCH FOR A PORTAL TO LIFE!
I'VE FAILED--- FAILED!
THERE IS NO PORTAL OF LIFE! THE LEGEND LIED! I'LL DIE HERE!
5.


YYAAAAHH!
MY THANKS, HUMAN, FOR BREAKING THE SLEEP OF MILLENNIA!
IT IS EONS SINCE NERON-ALAK STRODE THE QUAKING SURFACE OF --EARTH!
AH! THE KYTH-RAYS STILL OPEN THE HIDDEN PORTAL!
WAIT! DON'T GO!
NO, LITTLE HUMAN, I MUST BE OFF!
RELICS FROM EARTH ARE RARE ON MY DISTANT WORLD!
NO, NO! YOU MUST NOT! IT'S WRONG!
COME BACK! SAVE ME! I CAN HELP YOU!
PUNY EARTHLING--YOU CANNOT EVEN SAVE YOURSELF!
6
THUDD!
THESE PRIMITIVE SUPERSTITIONS ARE SO AMUSING!
BUT NO MATTER... NERON-ALAK IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO TAKE WHAT HE DESIRES!
--THE END--?

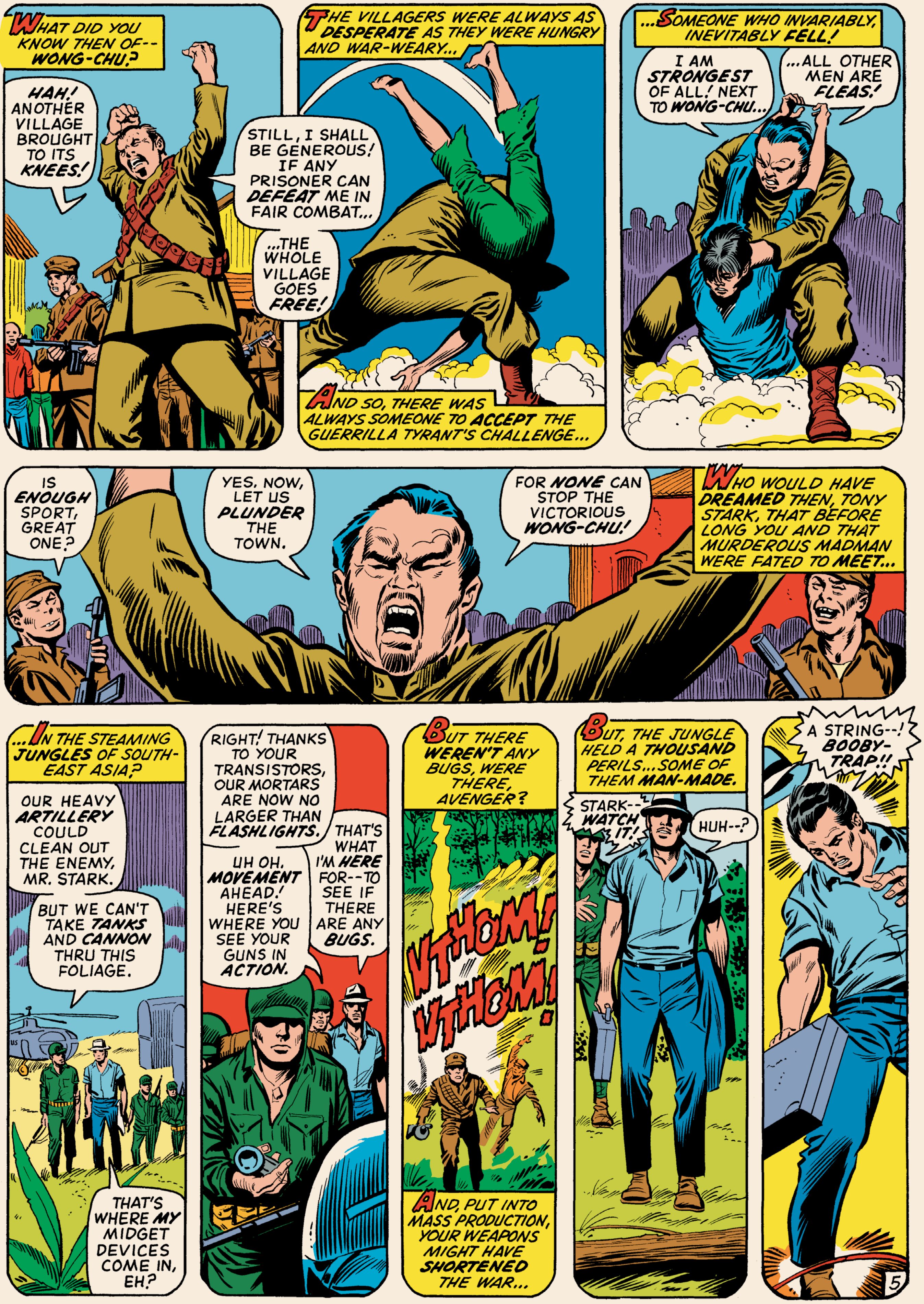

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN™
YOUR NAME IS ANTHONY STARK, AND YOU LIVE TWO LIVES: ONE, AS THE MILLIONAIRE INVENTOR AND MUNITIONS-MAKER WHO IS THE ENVY OF MEN, THE SOUGHT-AFTER PRIZE OF WOMEN...THE OTHER, AS THE GRIM ARMOR-CLAD AVENGER WHO STREAKS THIS BLEAK MARCH MORNING THRU SAD AND RAIN-SWEPT SKIES.
BUT THAT IS MERELY THE BAREST BEGINNINGS OF THE REASON WHY, IF ANY HAD EARS TO HEAR, THEY WOULD HEAR YOU CRY--ALOUD AND IN ANGUISH--
WHY MUST THERE BE AN IRON MAN?
BUT THE GRIEF-STRICKEN MOURNERS IN THE LONG ISLAND CEMETERY BELOW DO NOT LISTEN... DO NOT HEAR....!
AND SO, YOU'RE LEFT ALONE IN YOUR TORTURED SORROW...
...MORE ALONE, PERHAPS, THAN ANY MAN HAS EVER BEEN...!
STAN LEE * ROY THOMAS * BARRY SMITH
EDITOR WRITER ARTIST
JIM MOONEY INKER
ARTIE SIMEK LETTERER
BASED IN PART ON A STORY BY STAN LEE AND LARRY LIEBER FOR TALES OF SUSPENSE #39.
8592

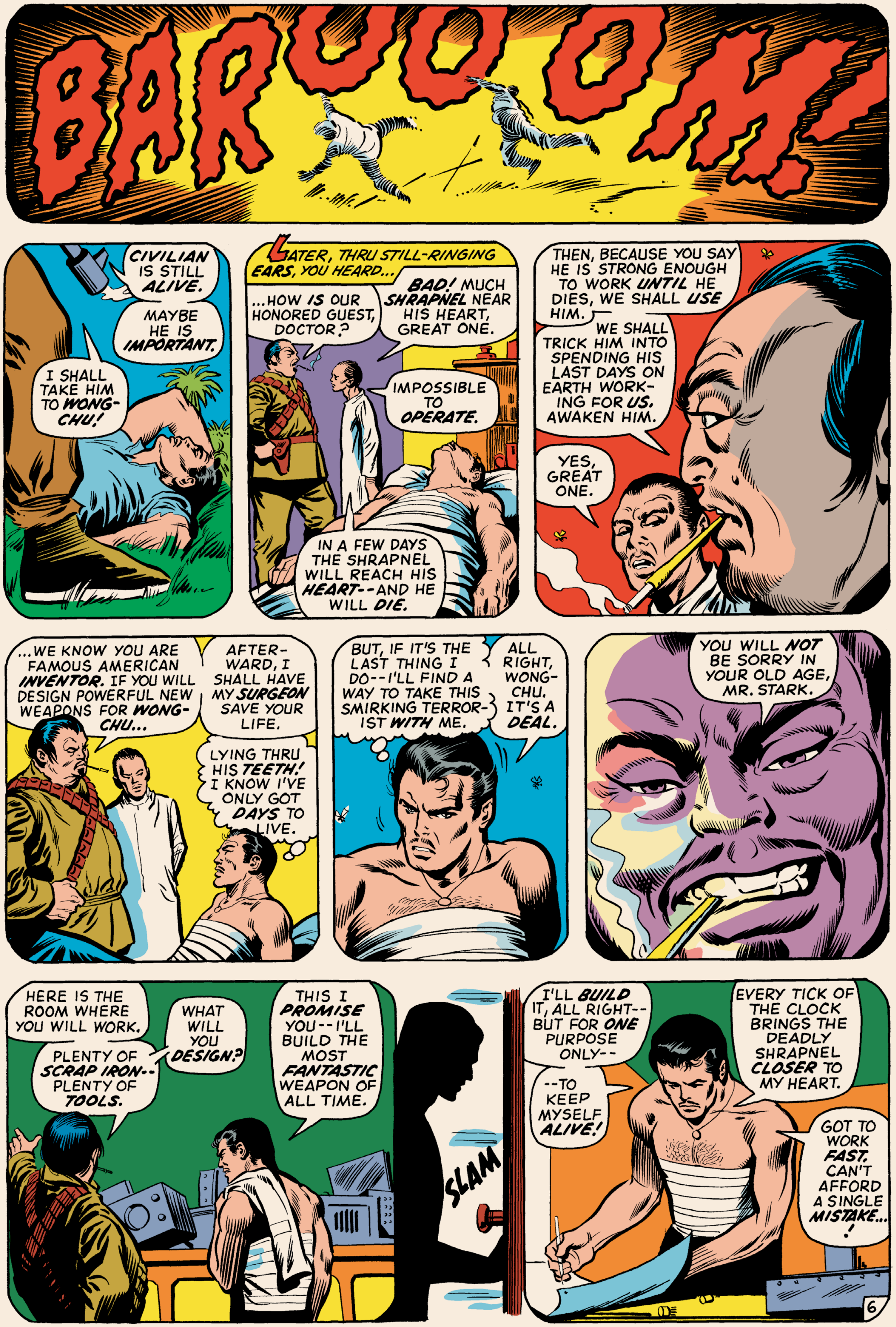

NOW, YOU STRIDE LIKE A GREAT, INSENSATE ROBOT THRU THE HUMAN THRONG THAT RINGS KEVIN O'BRIEN'S GRAVE...
AND YOU WISH, IN SILENCE, THAT YOU WERE, INDEED, A THING OF UNFEELING METAL...
...INSTEAD OF ONLY A VERY VULNERABLE MAN, INSIDE AN ARMORED SHELL.
MR. GILBERT --I'M SORRY I COULDN'T MAKE IT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE THIS WAY...
BUT... WHO'S THAT MAN BY KEVIN'S GRAVE?
THAT'S... KEVIN'S FATHER.
HE FLEW IN THIS MORNING... FOR THE FUNERAL.
GO TELL HIM YOU'RE SORRY YOU'RE IRON MAN-- AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT...
...TELL HIM YOU'RE SORRY YOU KILLED HIS SON!
GILBERT! IN HEAVEN'S NAME, STOP IT, MAN!
AS YOUR FELLOW BOARD MEMBERS, WE'RE IN THIS THING JUST AS DEEP AS YOU ARE.
BUT, IN THE NAME OF HUMAN DECENCY-- SHUT UP!
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, DOES IT, AVENGER? FOR, YOU ARE OBLIVIOUS TO ALL SAVE THE FALLING RAIN...THE TOO-FAMILIAR DRONE OF THE MINISTER'S WORDS...
"ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST..."
...AND SUDDENLY, INTERRUPTING YOUR SOMBRE BROODING, THE VOICE OF MARIANNE...THE VOICE OF THE GIRL YOU LOVE...
...THE GIRL WITH POWERS OF EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION...!
TONY...I... I WARNED YOU NOT TO COME.
THERE IS DANGER FOR YOU HERE. I CAN...FEEL IT.
2

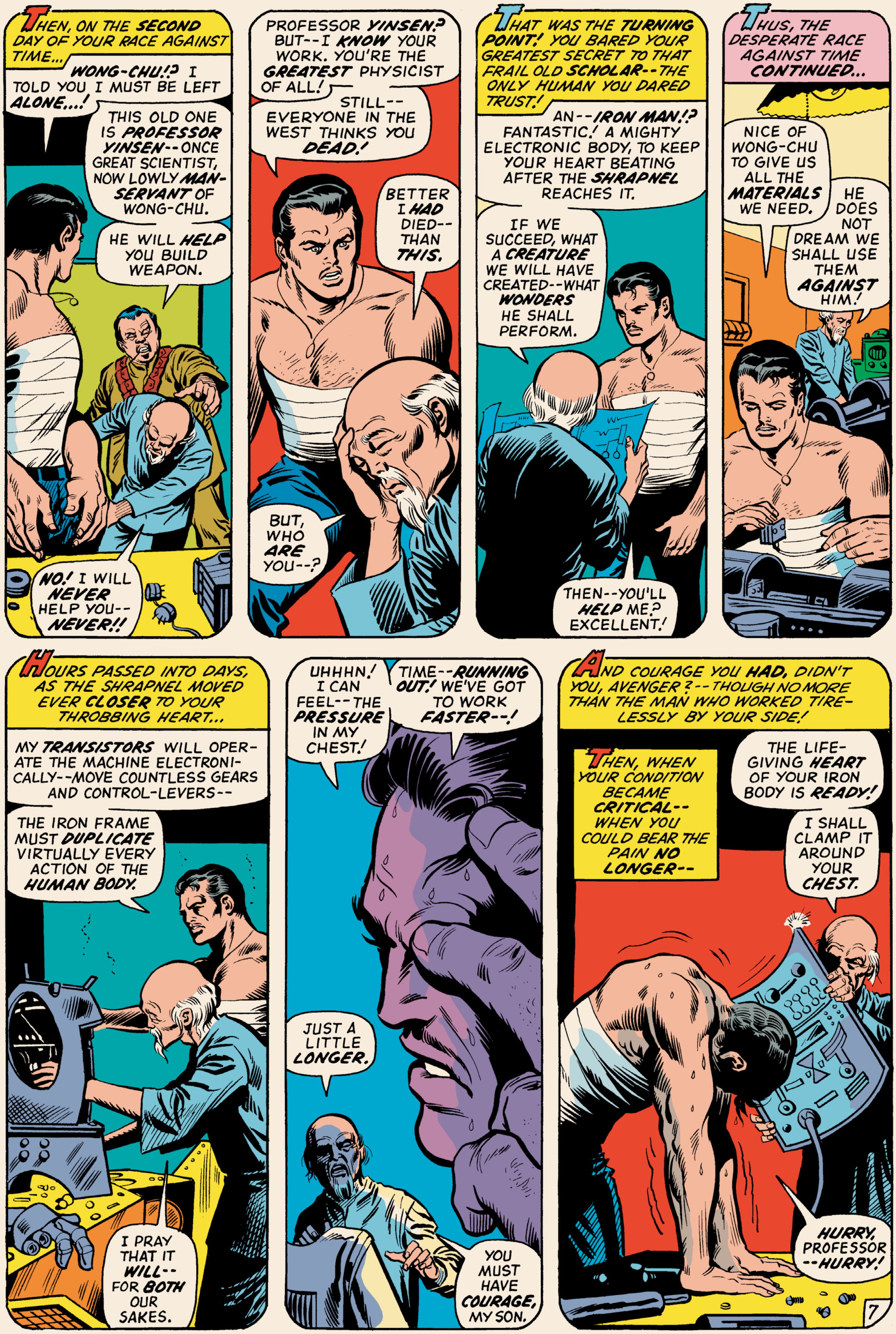

MUST YOU TWO MUMBLE AT EACH OTHER?
BAD ENOUGH, STARK HAD THE POOR TASTE TO SEND YOU AS HIS PROXY, INSTEAD OF COMING HIMSELF!
LOOK, GILBERT-- YOU KNOW HOW UPSET HE--
GENTLEMEN, PLEASE--THIS IS NO TIME FOR THE AIRING OF PRIVATE QUARRELS.
SORRY, REVEREND. YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL WAIT UNTIL--
SCREEEEE
UH OH! THERE'S TROUBLE!
ALL RIGHT, IRON MAN-- HOP IN WITH US!
CAN'T IT WAIT, OFFICER?
THEY WANT YOU FOR QUESTIONING, IN CONNECTION WITH O'BRIEN'S DEATH.
NEGATIVE! NOW DO YOU COME QUIETLY, OR--
--OR NOT AT ALL! ISN'T THAT MY SECOND CHOICE?
STAY BACK, JOE! THOSE REPULSOR RAYS OF HIS COULD TEAR US APART!
YEEOW!
KZAP!
SURRENDER, IRON MAN! THE AUTHORITIES COULD MAKE BETTER USE OF STARK'S PRECIOUS ARMOR THAN YOU EVER DID!
ALL YOU EVER DID WITH IT-- WAS--DESTROY!
WHY MUST THERE BE AN IRON MAN? WHY??
MAYBE GILBERT'S RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING, AVENGER.
YOU TOO, MARIANNE!?
AND YET-- MAYBE YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT.
IT WAS ARMOR LIKE MINE THAT DROVE KEVIN MAD--AND CAUSED HIS DEATH!
AND NOW-- I'VE EVEN MADE A FARCE OF HIS FUNERAL.
STOP HIM! SHOOT TO WOUND HIM, SAM!
HOW? HE SHRUGS OFF BULLETS LIKE THEY WERE CHICLETS!
TRUE ENOUGH, TONY! YOU HARDLY FEEL THE STEEL PELLETS RICOCHETING OFF YOUR SKINTIGHT ARMOR...
...BECAUSE YOU'RE HEARING, OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN YOUR BRAIN, THE QUESTION YOU HAD FIRST VOICED...
...AND MARIANNE, OF ALL PEOPLE, HAD REPEATED:
"WHY MUST THERE BE AN IRON MAN?"
3

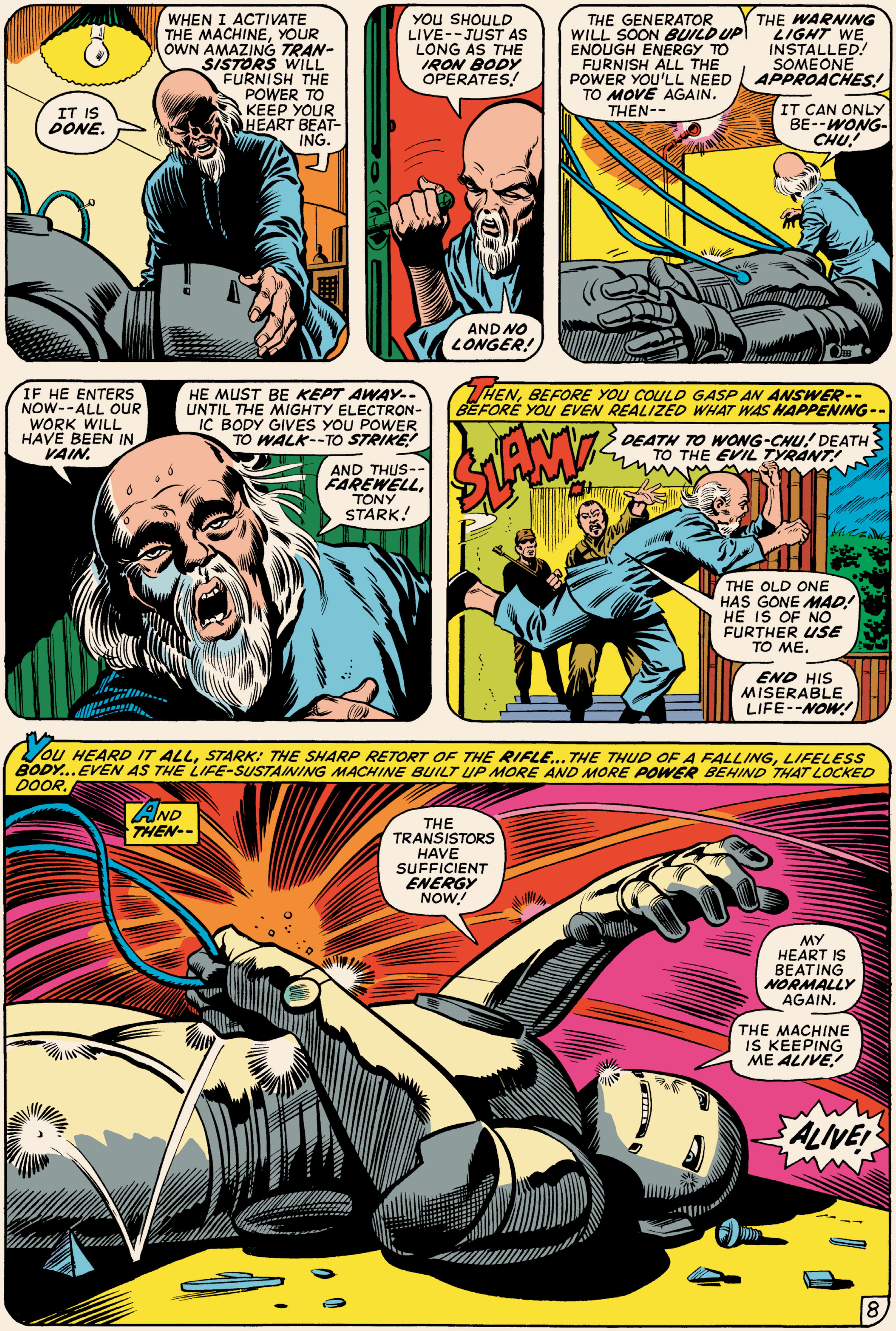

LIKE SOME BRUTAL, BLUDGEONING TRIPHAMMER, THE QUESTION POUNDS WITHIN YOUR SKULL...SO THAT YOU SCARCELY NOTE THE RISING NORTHERN WIND, THE DRIVING RAIN WHICH PELTS YOUR RUSTPROOF ARMOR...
MY ARMOR! MAYBE SIMON GILBERT IS RIGHT! MAYBE I SHOULD SURRENDER IT AND MYSELF TO THE AUTHORITIES--TELL THEM WHO I REALLY AM--
--LET THEM TRY IRON MAN--AND TONY STARK--FOR MURDER.
WHAT GILBERT DOESN'T KNOW IS KEVIN O'BRIEN WASN'T THE FIRST MAN TO DIE BECAUSE OF THIS METAL SHELL THAT KEEPS ME ALIVE.
BUT YOU KNOW WHO WAS FIRST, DON'T YOU, AVENGER?
YOU KNOW ALL TOO WELL...!
SLOWLY, ONE BY ONE, THE WALLS YOU'VE BUILT AROUND YOUR MIND BEGIN TO CRUMBLE--AND YOU RE-LIVE IT STILL AGAIN...
WHAT YOU CLAIM FOR THAT CRAZY GADGET OF YOURS IS IMPOSSIBLE.
THINK SO, GENERAL? THEN WATCH.
WE'RE ALL EYES, FELLA.
OH, COME NOW, MR. STARK...
YOU HAVE SO MANY LABORATORIES, TONY STARK. AT WHICH ONE DID THE FATEFUL DEMONSTRATION TAKE PLACE? CAN YOU TEAR DOWN THAT FINAL WALL AND REMEMBER? AND DOES IT TRULY MATTER...?
THERE! I'VE SWITCHED IT ON.
NOW, IT'S ENERGIZING THIS COMMON, GARDEN-VARIETY MAGNET...!
CLIK!
THE DOOR OF THAT LOCKED VAULT--IT'S STARTING TO BUDGE--!
URRRRRHHH
NATURALLY! MY TINY TRANSISTORS ARE SO POWERFUL--
--THEY CAN INCREASE THE FORCE OF ANY DEVICE--A THOUSANDFOLD!
LOOK OUT, GENERAL! THERE SHE BLOWS!
KRAKK!
NOW DO YOU BELIEVE MY "CRAZY GADGETS" CAN BRING AN EARLY END TO THE BLOODSHED IN VIETNAM?
STARK, AFTER WHAT I'VE JUST SEEN...
...I'LL BELIEVE ANYTHING!
4.

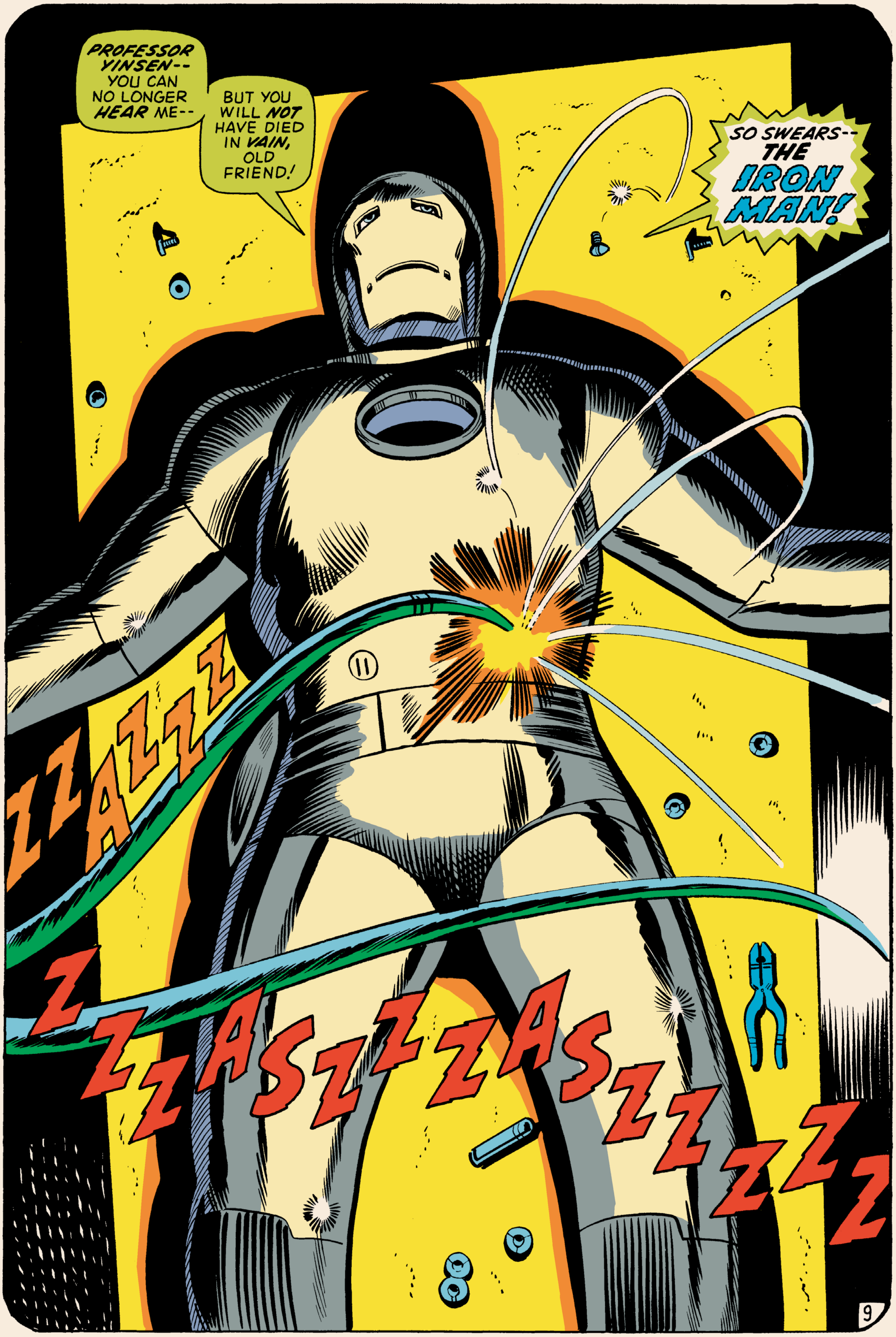
AND THERE WAS STILL **ANOTHER** SIDE TO YOU THEN, WASN'T THERE, STARK? YOU WERE A **SOPHISTICATE** AS WELL AS A SCIENTIST... A MILLIONAIRE **PLAYBOY** AS WELL AS A PHENOMENONALLY GIFTED INVENTOR... AS MUCH AT HOME IN **HIGH SOCIETY** AS IN A CLUTTERED LABORATORY...

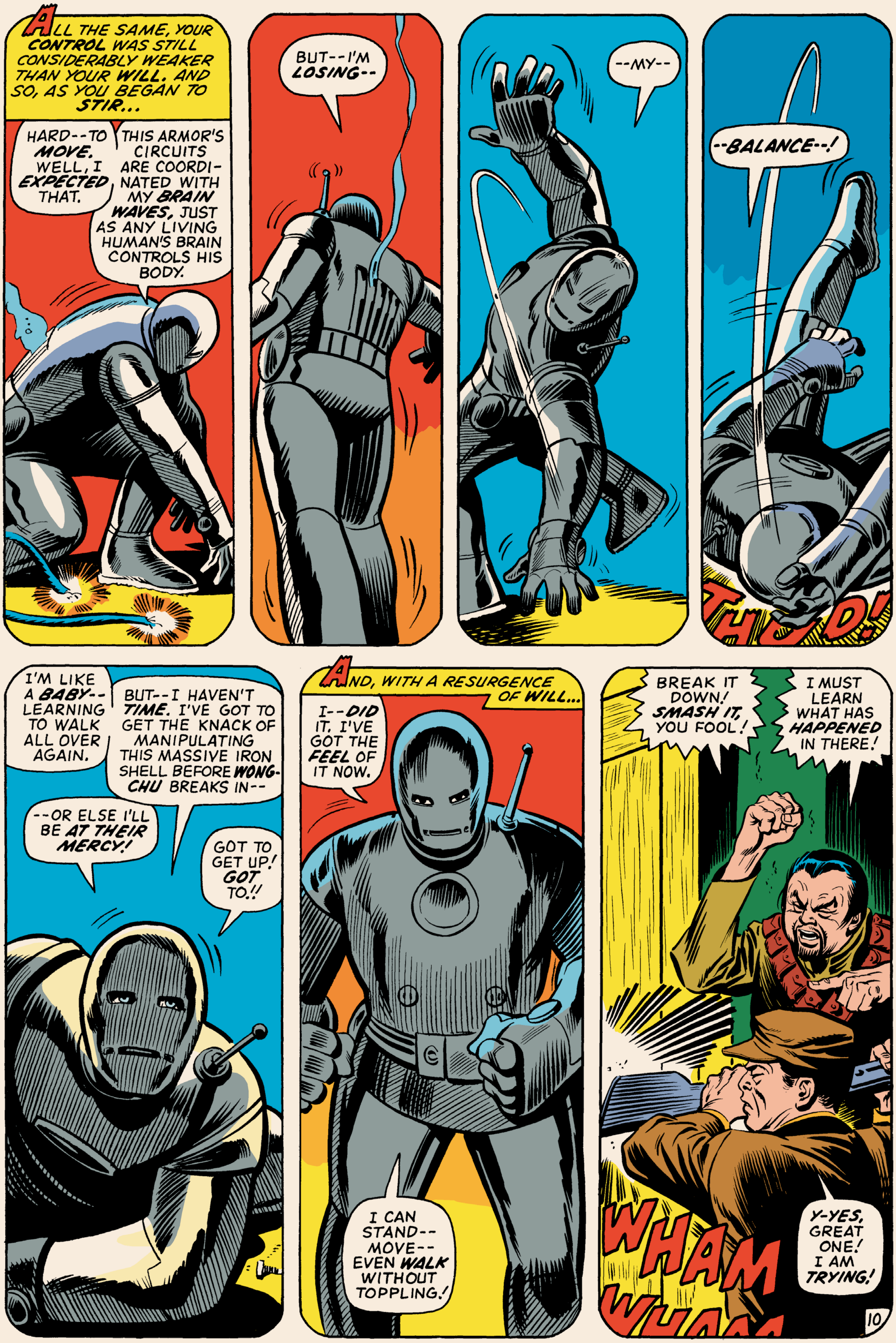

WHAT DID YOU KNOW THEN OF-- WONG-CHU?
HAH! ANOTHER VILLAGE BROUGHT TO ITS KNEES!
STILL, I SHALL BE GENEROUS! IF ANY PRISONER CAN DEFEAT ME IN FAIR COMBAT...
...THE WHOLE VILLAGE GOES FREE!
THE VILLAGERS WERE ALWAYS AS DESPERATE AS THEY WERE HUNGRY AND WAR-WEARY...
AND SO, THERE WAS ALWAYS SOMEONE TO ACCEPT THE GUERRILLA TYRANT'S CHALLENGE...
...SOMEONE WHO INVARIABLY, INEVITABLY FELL!
I AM STRONGEST OF ALL! NEXT TO WONG-CHU...
...ALL OTHER MEN ARE FLEAS!
IS ENOUGH SPORT, GREAT ONE?
YES. NOW, LET US PLUNDER THE TOWN.
FOR NONE CAN STOP THE VICTORIOUS WONG-CHU!
WHO WOULD HAVE DREAMED THEN, TONY STARK, THAT BEFORE LONG YOU AND THAT MURDEROUS MADMAN WERE FATED TO MEET...
...IN THE STEAMING JUNGLES OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA?
OUR HEAVY ARTILLERY COULD CLEAN OUT THE ENEMY, MR. STARK.
BUT WE CAN'T TAKE TANKS AND CANNON THRU THIS FOLIAGE.
THAT'S WHERE MY MIDGET DEVICES COME IN, EH?
RIGHT! THANKS TO YOUR TRANSISTORS, OUR MORTARS ARE NOW NO LARGER THAN FLASHLIGHTS.
UH OH. MOVEMENT AHEAD! HERE'S WHERE YOU SEE YOUR GUNS IN ACTION.
THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR--TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY BUGS.
BUT THERE WEREN'T ANY BUGS, WERE THERE, AVENGER?
VTHOM! VTHOM!
AND, PUT INTO MASS PRODUCTION, YOUR WEAPONS MIGHT HAVE SHORTENED THE WAR...
BUT, THE JUNGLE HELD A THOUSAND PERILS... SOME OF THEM MAN-MADE.
STARK-- WATCH IT!
HUH--?
A STRING--! BOOBY-TRAP!!
5

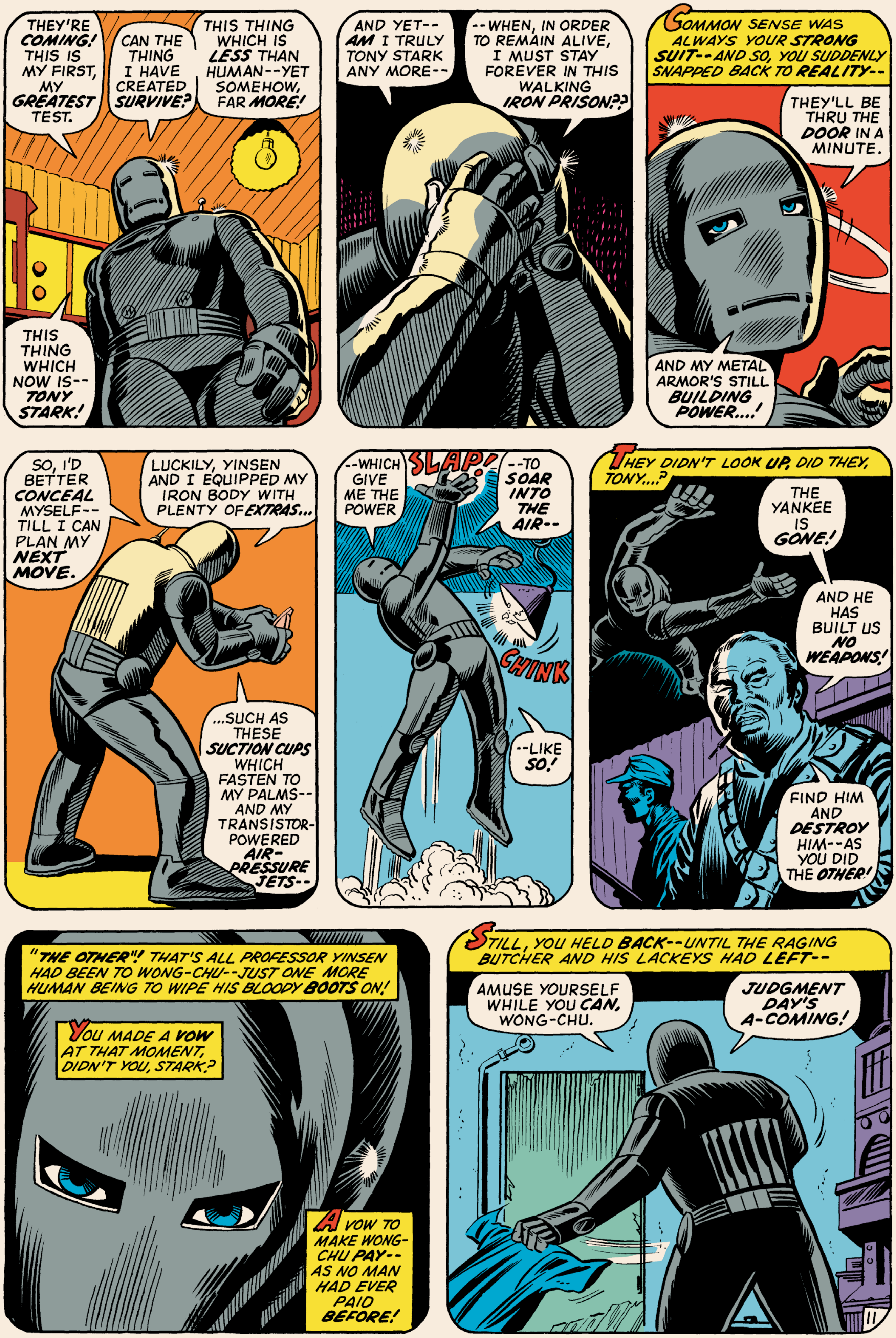

BAROOOM!
CIVILIAN IS STILL ALIVE.
MAYBE HE IS IMPORTANT.
I SHALL TAKE HIM TO WONG-CHU!
LATER, THRU STILL-RINGING EARS, YOU HEARD...
...HOW IS OUR HONORED GUEST, DOCTOR?
BAD! MUCH SHRAPNEL NEAR HIS HEART, GREAT ONE.
IMPOSSIBLE TO OPERATE.
IN A FEW DAYS THE SHRAPNEL WILL REACH HIS HEART--AND HE WILL DIE.
THEN, BECAUSE YOU SAY HE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO WORK UNTIL HE DIES, WE SHALL USE HIM.
WE SHALL TRICK HIM INTO SPENDING HIS LAST DAYS ON EARTH WORKING FOR US. AWAKEN HIM.
YES, GREAT ONE.
...WE KNOW YOU ARE FAMOUS AMERICAN INVENTOR. IF YOU WILL DESIGN POWERFUL NEW WEAPONS FOR WONG-CHU...
AFTERWARD, I SHALL HAVE MY SURGEON SAVE YOUR LIFE.
LYING THRU HIS TEETH! I KNOW I'VE ONLY GOT DAYS TO LIVE.
BUT, IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO--I'LL FIND A WAY TO TAKE THIS SMIRKING TERRORIST WITH ME.
ALL RIGHT, WONG-CHU. IT'S A DEAL.
YOU WILL NOT BE SORRY IN YOUR OLD AGE, MR. STARK.
HERE IS THE ROOM WHERE YOU WILL WORK.
WHAT WILL YOU DESIGN?
PLENTY OF SCRAP IRON--PLENTY OF TOOLS.
THIS I PROMISE YOU--I'LL BUILD THE MOST FANTASTIC WEAPON OF ALL TIME.
SLAM
I'LL BUILD IT, ALL RIGHT--BUT FOR ONE PURPOSE ONLY--
--TO KEEP MYSELF ALIVE!
EVERY TICK OF THE CLOCK BRINGS THE DEADLY SHRAPNEL CLOSER TO MY HEART.
GOT TO WORK FAST. CAN'T AFFORD A SINGLE MISTAKE...!
6

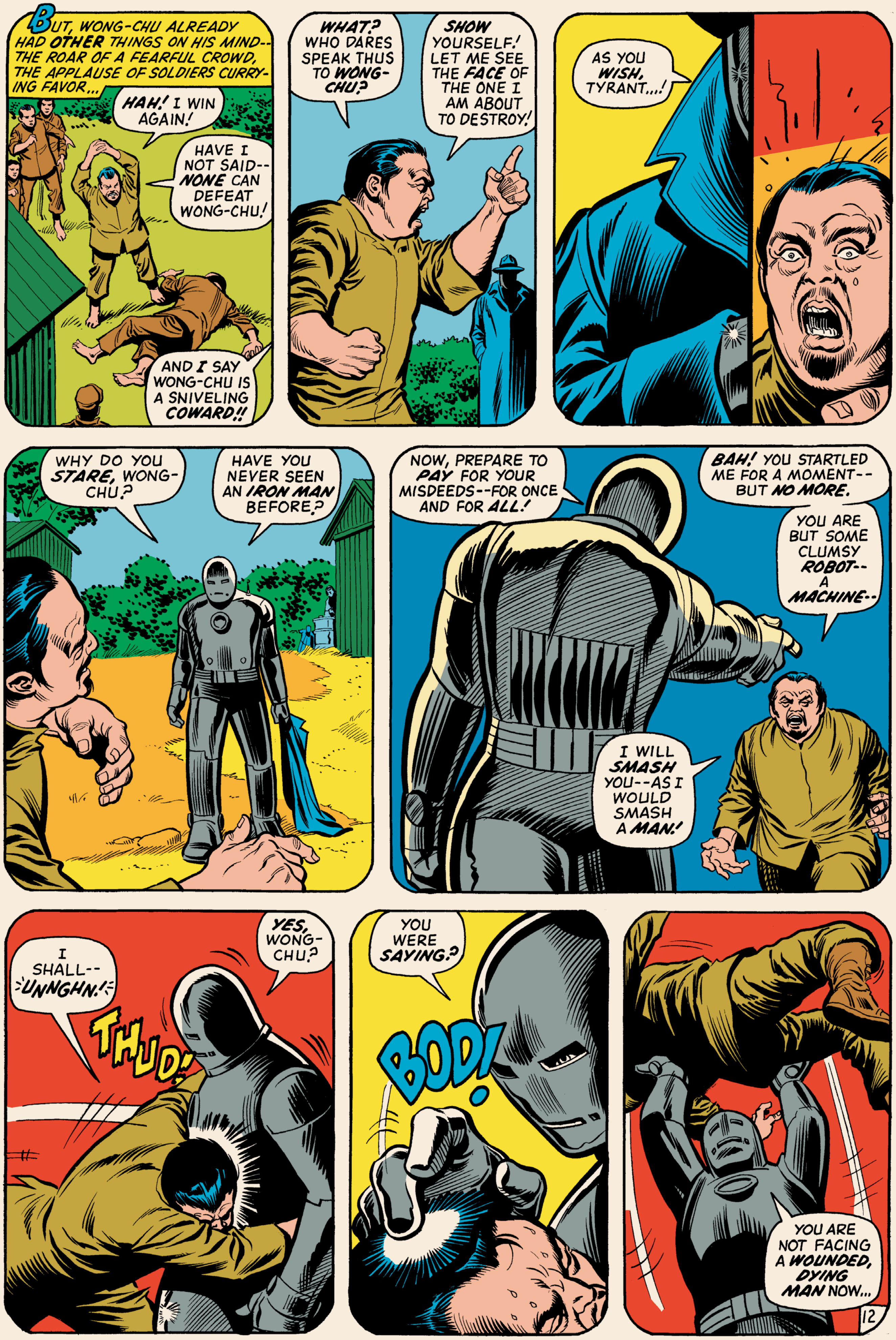

THEN, ON THE SECOND DAY OF YOUR RACE AGAINST TIME...
WONG-CHU!? I TOLD YOU I MUST BE LEFT ALONE...!
THIS OLD ONE IS PROFESSOR YINSEN--ONCE GREAT SCIENTIST, NOW LOWLY MAN-SERVANT OF WONG-CHU.
HE WILL HELP YOU BUILD WEAPON.
NO! I WILL NEVER HELP YOU--NEVER!!
PROFESSOR YINSEN!? BUT--I KNOW YOUR WORK. YOU'RE THE GREATEST PHYSICIST OF ALL!
STILL--EVERYONE IN THE WEST THINKS YOU DEAD!
BETTER I HAD DIED--THAN THIS.
BUT, WHO ARE YOU--?
THAT WAS THE TURNING POINT! YOU BARED YOUR GREATEST SECRET TO THAT FRAIL OLD SCHOLAR--THE ONLY HUMAN YOU DARED TRUST!
AN--IRON MAN!? FANTASTIC! A MIGHTY ELECTRONIC BODY, TO KEEP YOUR HEART BEATING AFTER THE SHRAPNEL REACHES IT.
IF WE SUCCEED, WHAT A CREATURE WE WILL HAVE CREATED--WHAT WONDERS HE SHALL PERFORM.
THEN--YOU'LL HELP ME? EXCELLENT!
THUS, THE DESPERATE RACE AGAINST TIME CONTINUED...
NICE OF WONG-CHU TO GIVE US ALL THE MATERIALS WE NEED.
HE DOES NOT DREAM WE SHALL USE THEM AGAINST HIM!
HOURS PASSED INTO DAYS, AS THE SHRAPNEL MOVED EVER CLOSER TO YOUR THROBBING HEART...
MY TRANSISTORS WILL OPERATE THE MACHINE ELECTRONICALLY--MOVE COUNTLESS GEARS AND CONTROL-LEVERS--
THE IRON FRAME MUST DUPLICATE VIRTUALLY EVERY ACTION OF THE HUMAN BODY.
I PRAY THAT IT WILL--FOR BOTH OUR SAKES.
UHHHN! I CAN FEEL--THE PRESSURE IN MY CHEST!
TIME--RUNNING OUT! WE'VE GOT TO WORK FASTER--!
JUST A LITTLE LONGER.
YOU MUST HAVE COURAGE, MY SON.
AND COURAGE YOU HAD, DIDN'T YOU, AVENGER?--THOUGH NO MORE THAN THE MAN WHO WORKED TIRELESSLY BY YOUR SIDE!
THEN, WHEN YOUR CONDITION BECAME CRITICAL--WHEN YOU COULD BEAR THE PAIN NO LONGER--
THE LIFE-GIVING HEART OF YOUR IRON BODY IS READY!
I SHALL CLAMP IT AROUND YOUR CHEST.
HURRY, PROFESSOR--HURRY!
7

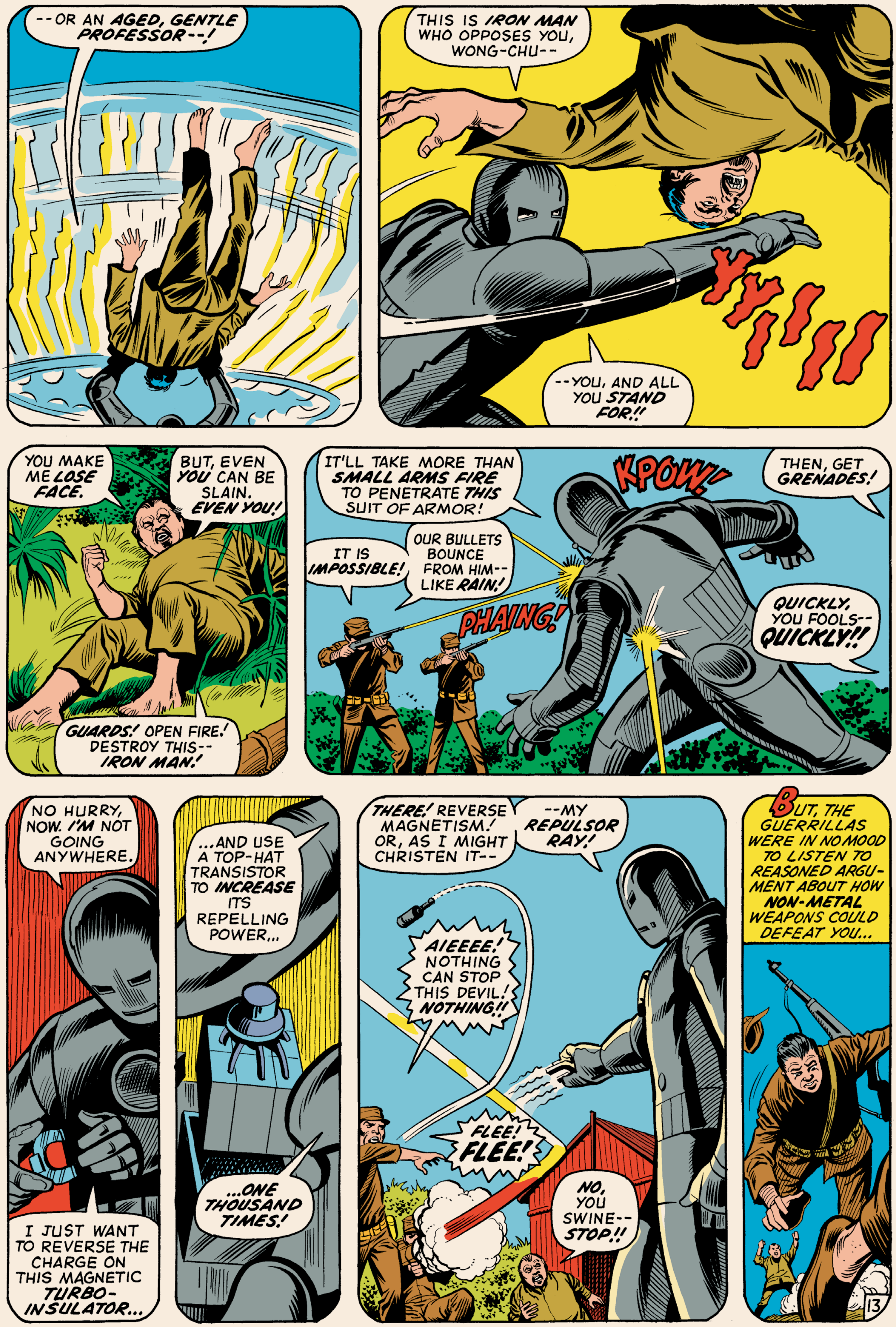

WHEN I ACTIVATE THE MACHINE, YOUR OWN AMAZING TRANSISTORS WILL FURNISH THE POWER TO KEEP YOUR HEART BEATING.
IT IS DONE.
YOU SHOULD LIVE--JUST AS LONG AS THE IRON BODY OPERATES!
AND NO LONGER!
THE GENERATOR WILL SOON BUILD UP ENOUGH ENERGY TO FURNISH ALL THE POWER YOU'LL NEED TO MOVE AGAIN. THEN--
THE WARNING LIGHT WE INSTALLED! SOMEONE APPROACHES!
IT CAN ONLY BE--WONG-CHU!
IF HE ENTERS NOW--ALL OUR WORK WILL HAVE BEEN IN VAIN.
HE MUST BE KEPT AWAY--UNTIL THE MIGHTY ELECTRONIC BODY GIVES YOU POWER TO WALK--TO STRIKE!
AND THUS--FAREWELL, TONY STARK!
THEN, BEFORE YOU COULD GASP AN ANSWER--BEFORE YOU EVEN REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING--
SLAM!
DEATH TO WONG-CHU! DEATH TO THE EVIL TYRANT!
THE OLD ONE HAS GONE MAD! HE IS OF NO FURTHER USE TO ME.
END HIS MISERABLE LIFE--NOW!
YOU HEARD IT ALL, STARK: THE SHARP RETORT OF THE RIFLE...THE THUD OF A FALLING, LIFELESS BODY...EVEN AS THE LIFE-SUSTAINING MACHINE BUILT UP MORE AND MORE POWER BEHIND THAT LOCKED DOOR.
AND THEN--
THE TRANSISTORS HAVE SUFFICIENT ENERGY NOW!
MY HEART IS BEATING NORMALLY AGAIN.
THE MACHINE IS KEEPING ME ALIVE!
ALIVE!
8

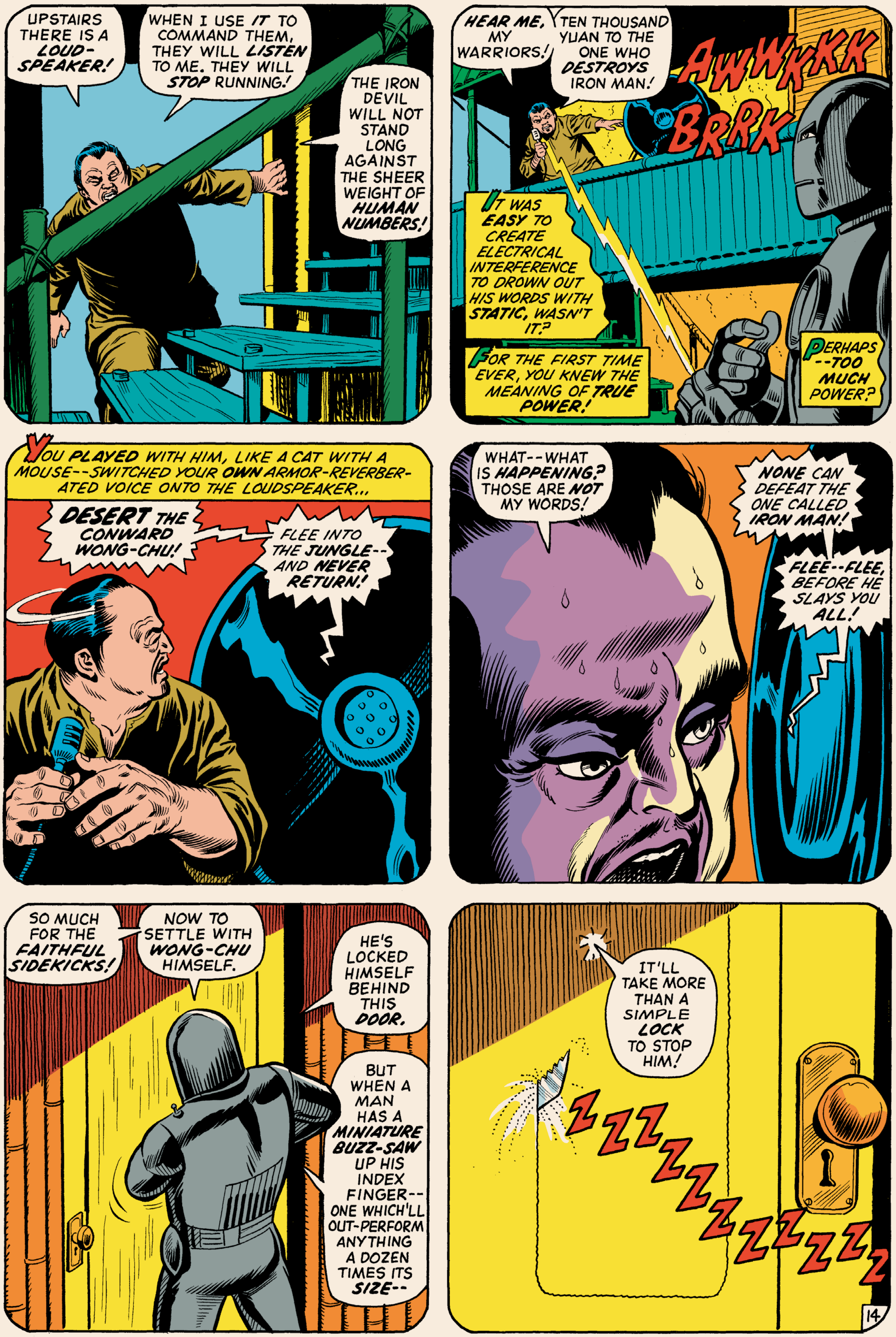

PROFESSOR YINSEN-- YOU CAN NO LONGER HEAR ME--
BUT YOU WILL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN, OLD FRIEND!
SO SWEARS-- THE IRON MAN!
ZZAZZZZ
ZZZASZZZZASZZZZZ
9

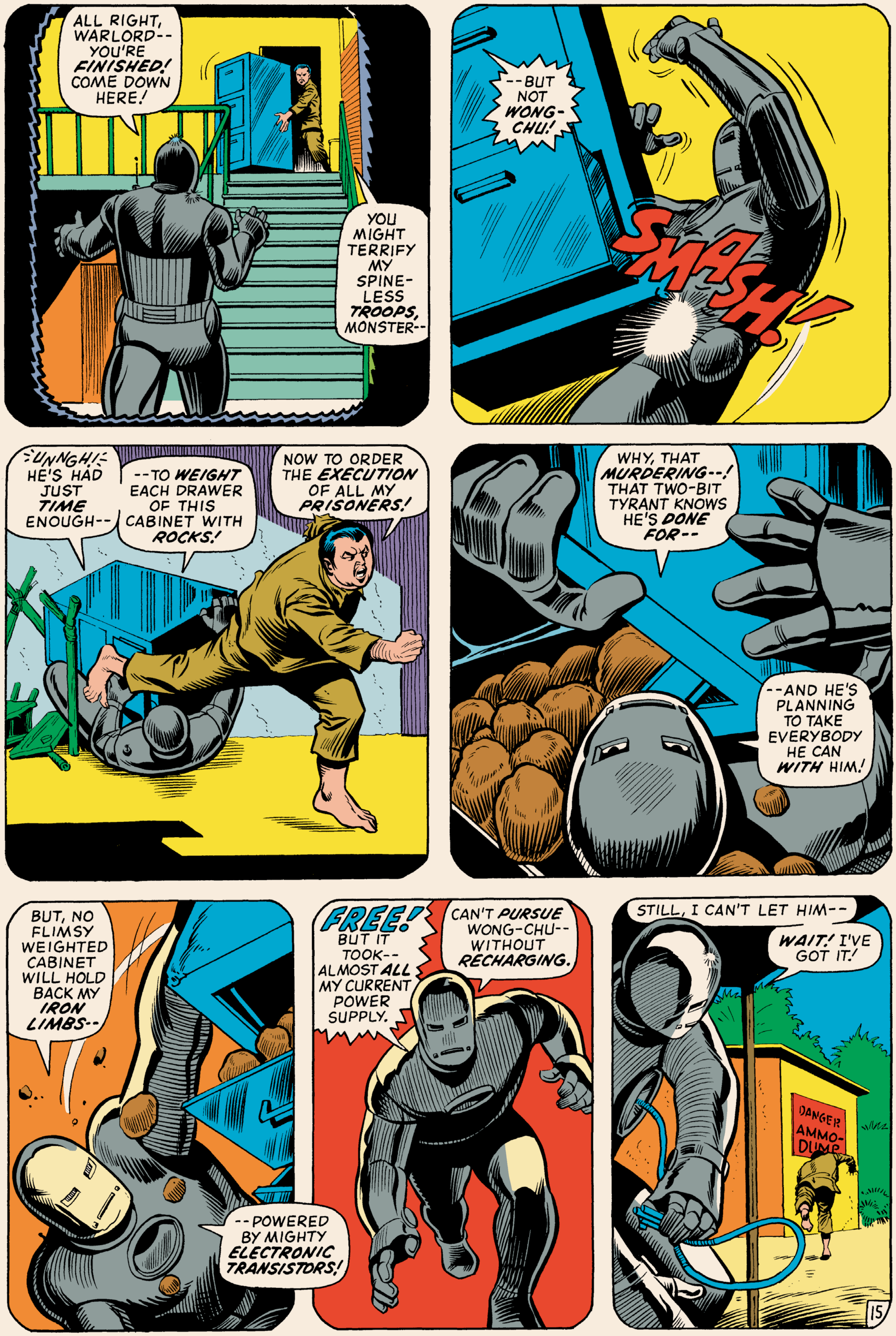

ALL THE SAME, YOUR CONTROL WAS STILL CONSIDERABLY WEAKER THAN YOUR WILL. AND SO, AS YOU BEGAN TO STIR...
HARD--TO MOVE. WELL, I EXPECTED THAT.
THIS ARMOR'S CIRCUITS ARE COORDINATED WITH MY BRAIN WAVES, JUST AS ANY LIVING HUMAN'S BRAIN CONTROLS HIS BODY.
BUT--I'M LOSING--
--MY--
--BALANCE--!
THUD!
I'M LIKE A BABY--LEARNING TO WALK ALL OVER AGAIN.
BUT--I HAVEN'T TIME. I'VE GOT TO GET THE KNACK OF MANIPULATING THIS MASSIVE IRON SHELL BEFORE WONG-CHU BREAKS IN--
--OR ELSE I'LL BE AT THEIR MERCY!
GOT TO GET UP! GOT TO!!
AND, WITH A RESURGENCE OF WILL...
I--DID IT. I'VE GOT THE FEEL OF IT NOW.
I CAN STAND--MOVE--EVEN WALK WITHOUT TOPPLING!
BREAK IT DOWN! SMASH IT, YOU FOOL!
I MUST LEARN WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THERE!
Y-YES, GREAT ONE! I AM TRYING!
WHAM
WHAM
10

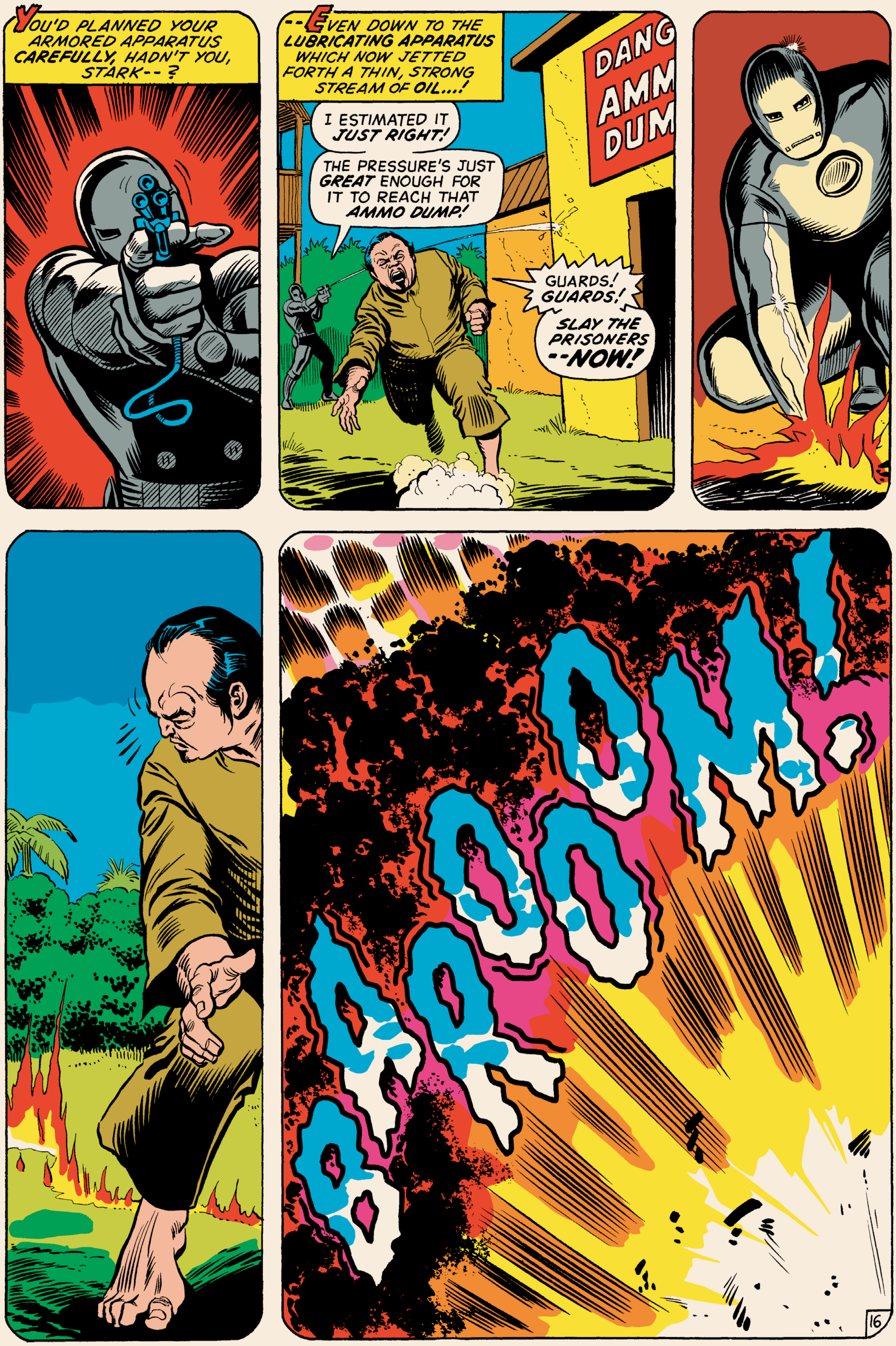

THEY'RE COMING! THIS IS MY FIRST, MY GREATEST TEST.
CAN THE THING I HAVE CREATED SURVIVE?
THIS THING WHICH IS LESS THAN HUMAN--YET SOMEHOW, FAR MORE!
THIS THING WHICH NOW IS--TONY STARK!
AND YET--AM I TRULY TONY STARK ANY MORE--
--WHEN, IN ORDER TO REMAIN ALIVE, I MUST STAY FOREVER IN THIS WALKING IRON PRISON??
COMMON SENSE WAS ALWAYS YOUR STRONG SUIT--AND SO, YOU SUDDENLY SNAPPED BACK TO REALITY--
THEY'LL BE THRU THE DOOR IN A MINUTE.
AND MY METAL ARMOR'S STILL BUILDING POWER....!
SO, I'D BETTER CONCEAL MYSELF--TILL I CAN PLAN MY NEXT MOVE.
LUCKILY, YINSEN AND I EQUIPPED MY IRON BODY WITH PLENTY OF EXTRAS...
...SUCH AS THESE SUCTION CUPS WHICH FASTEN TO MY PALMS--AND MY TRANSISTOR-POWERED AIR-PRESSURE JETS--
--WHICH GIVE ME THE POWER
SLAP!
--TO SOAR INTO THE AIR--
CHINK
--LIKE SO!
THEY DIDN'T LOOK UP, DID THEY, TONY...?
THE YANKEE IS GONE!
AND HE HAS BUILT US NO WEAPONS!
FIND HIM AND DESTROY HIM--AS YOU DID THE OTHER!
"THE OTHER"! THAT'S ALL PROFESSOR YINSEN HAD BEEN TO WONG-CHU--JUST ONE MORE HUMAN BEING TO WIPE HIS BLOODY BOOTS ON!
YOU MADE A VOW AT THAT MOMENT, DIDN'T YOU, STARK?
A VOW TO MAKE WONG-CHU PAY--AS NO MAN HAD EVER PAID BEFORE!
STILL, YOU HELD BACK--UNTIL THE RAGING BUTCHER AND HIS LACKEYS HAD LEFT--
AMUSE YOURSELF WHILE YOU CAN, WONG-CHU.
JUDGMENT DAY'S A-COMING!
11

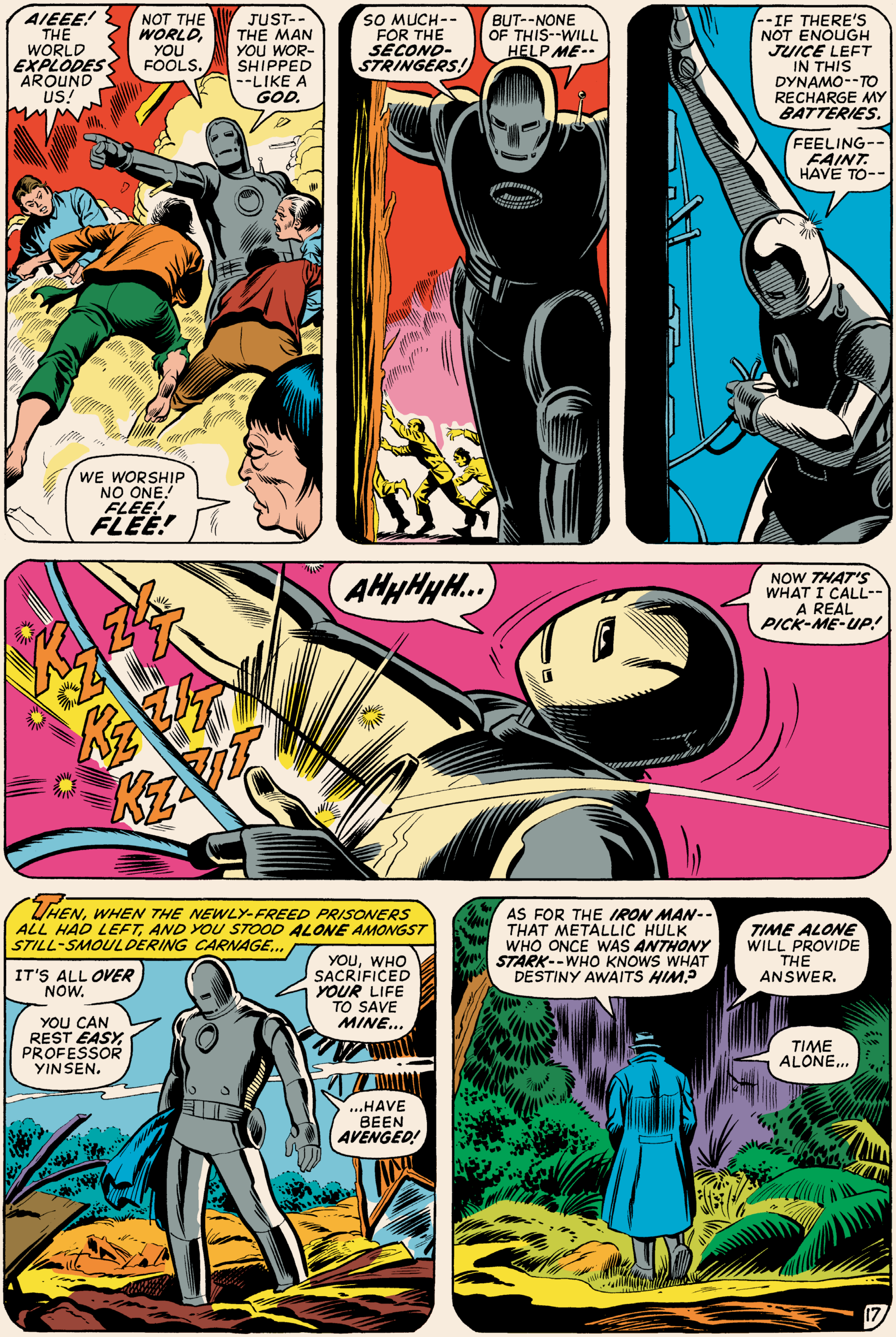

BUT, WONG-CHU ALREADY HAD OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND--THE ROAR OF A FEARFUL CROWD, THE APPLAUSE OF SOLDIERS CURRYING FAVOR...
HAH! I WIN AGAIN!
HAVE I NOT SAID--NONE CAN DEFEAT WONG-CHU!
AND I SAY WONG-CHU IS A SNIVELING COWARD!!
WHAT? WHO DARES SPEAK THUS TO WONG-CHU?
SHOW YOURSELF! LET ME SEE THE FACE OF THE ONE I AM ABOUT TO DESTROY!
AS YOU WISH, TYRANT...!
WHY DO YOU STARE, WONG-CHU?
HAVE YOU NEVER SEEN AN IRON MAN BEFORE?
NOW, PREPARE TO PAY FOR YOUR MISDEEDS--FOR ONCE AND FOR ALL!
BAH! YOU STARTLED ME FOR A MOMENT--BUT NO MORE.
YOU ARE BUT SOME CLUMSY ROBOT--A MACHINE--
I WILL SMASH YOU--AS I WOULD SMASH A MAN!
I SHALL--UNNGHN!
YES, WONG-CHU?
THUD!
YOU WERE SAYING?
BOD!
YOU ARE NOT FACING A WOUNDED, DYING MAN NOW...
12

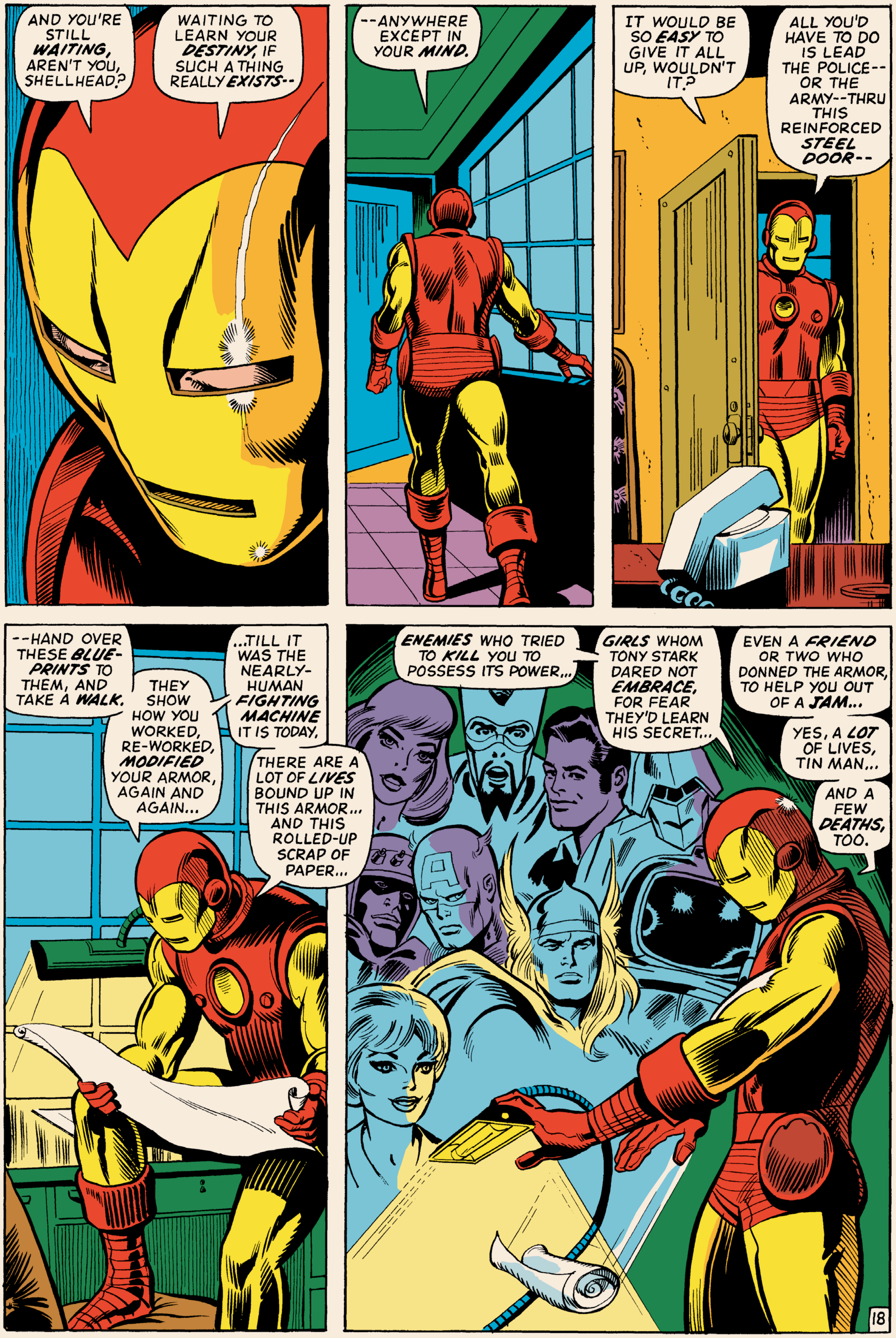

--OR AN AGED, GENTLE PROFESSOR--!
THIS IS IRON MAN WHO OPPOSES YOU, WONG-CHU--
YYIIII
--YOU, AND ALL YOU STAND FOR!!
YOU MAKE ME LOSE FACE.
BUT, EVEN YOU CAN BE SLAIN. EVEN YOU!
GUARDS! OPEN FIRE! DESTROY THIS--IRON MAN!
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN SMALL ARMS FIRE TO PENETRATE THIS SUIT OF ARMOR!
KPOW!
THEN, GET GRENADES!
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!
OUR BULLETS BOUNCE FROM HIM--LIKE RAIN!
PHAING!
QUICKLY, YOU FOOLS--QUICKLY!!
NO HURRY, NOW. I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
I JUST WANT TO REVERSE THE CHARGE ON THIS MAGNETIC TURBO-INSULATOR...
...AND USE A TOP-HAT TRANSISTOR TO INCREASE ITS REPELLING POWER...
...ONE THOUSAND TIMES!
THERE! REVERSE MAGNETISM! OR, AS I MIGHT CHRISTEN IT--
--MY REPULSOR RAY!
AIEEEE! NOTHING CAN STOP THIS DEVIL! NOTHING!!
FLEE! FLEE!
NO, YOU SWINE--STOP!!
BUT, THE GUERRILLAS WERE IN NO MOOD TO LISTEN TO REASONED ARGUMENT ABOUT HOW NON-METAL WEAPONS COULD DEFEAT YOU...
13

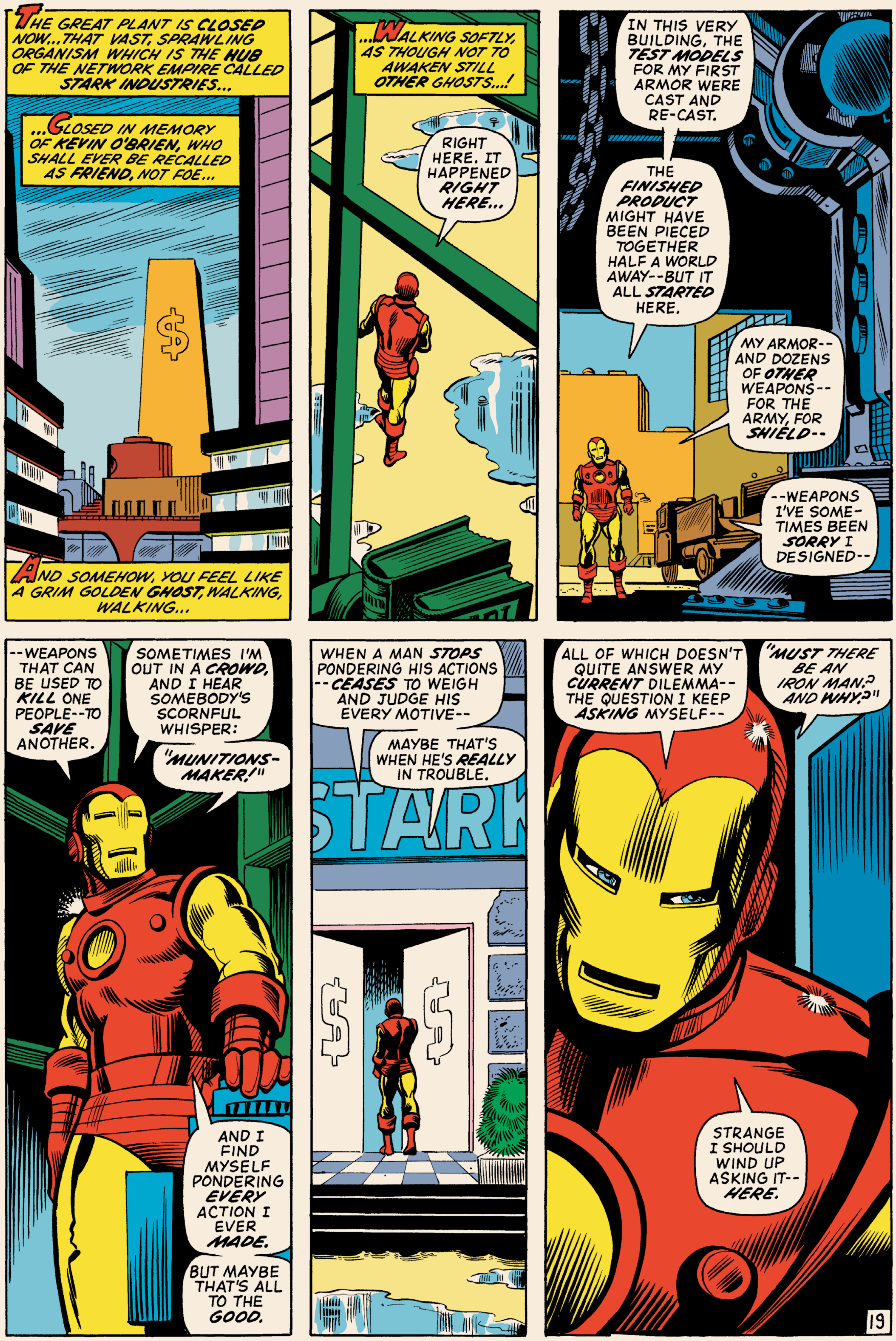

UPSTAIRS THERE IS A LOUD-SPEAKER!
WHEN I USE IT TO COMMAND THEM, THEY WILL LISTEN TO ME. THEY WILL STOP RUNNING!
THE IRON DEVIL WILL NOT STAND LONG AGAINST THE SHEER WEIGHT OF HUMAN NUMBERS!
HEAR ME, MY WARRIORS!
TEN THOUSAND YUAN TO THE ONE WHO DESTROYS IRON MAN!
AWWKKK
BRRK
IT WAS EASY TO CREATE ELECTRICAL INTERFERENCE TO DROWN OUT HIS WORDS WITH STATIC, WASN'T IT?
FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, YOU KNEW THE MEANING OF TRUE POWER!
PERHAPS --TOO MUCH POWER?
YOU PLAYED WITH HIM, LIKE A CAT WITH A MOUSE--SWITCHED YOUR OWN ARMOR-REVERBERATED VOICE ONTO THE LOUDSPEAKER...
DESERT THE CONWARD WONG-CHU!
FLEE INTO THE JUNGLE--AND NEVER RETURN!
WHAT--WHAT IS HAPPENING? THOSE ARE NOT MY WORDS!
NONE CAN DEFEAT THE ONE CALLED IRON MAN!
FLEE--FLEE, BEFORE HE SLAYS YOU ALL!
SO MUCH FOR THE FAITHFUL SIDEKICKS!
NOW TO SETTLE WITH WONG-CHU HIMSELF.
HE'S LOCKED HIMSELF BEHIND THIS DOOR.
BUT WHEN A MAN HAS A MINIATURE BUZZ-SAW UP HIS INDEX FINGER--ONE WHICH'LL OUT-PERFORM ANYTHING A DOZEN TIMES ITS SIZE--
IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A SIMPLE LOCK TO STOP HIM!
ZZZZZZZZZZZZ
14

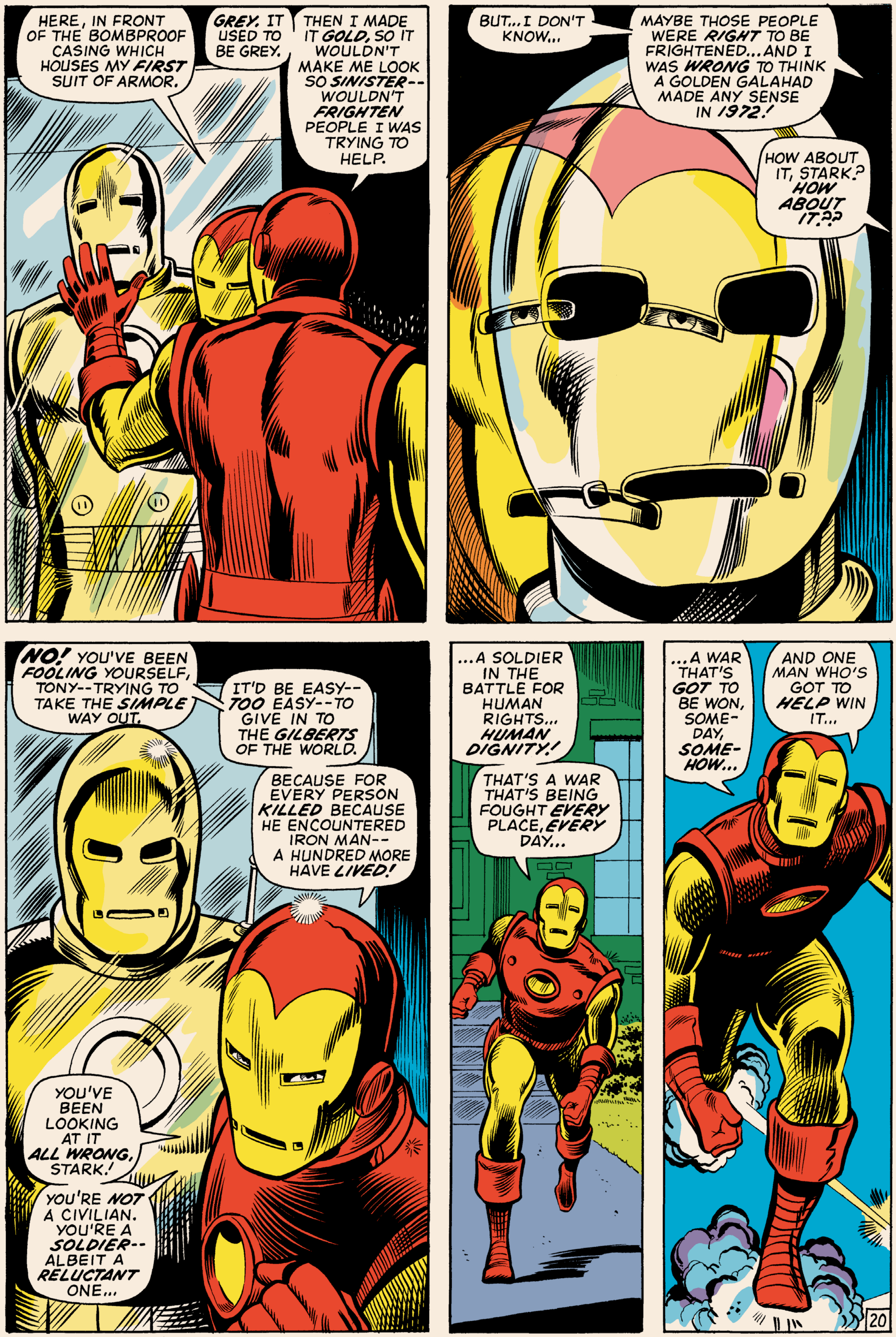

ALL RIGHT, WARLORD-- YOU'RE FINISHED! COME DOWN HERE!
YOU MIGHT TERRIFY MY SPINELESS TROOPS, MONSTER--
--BUT NOT WONG-CHU!
SMASH!
UNNGH!
HE'S HAD JUST TIME ENOUGH--
--TO WEIGHT EACH DRAWER OF THIS CABINET WITH ROCKS!
NOW TO ORDER THE EXECUTION OF ALL MY PRISONERS!
WHY, THAT MURDERING--! THAT TWO-BIT TYRANT KNOWS HE'S DONE FOR--
--AND HE'S PLANNING TO TAKE EVERYBODY HE CAN WITH HIM!
BUT, NO FLIMSY WEIGHTED CABINET WILL HOLD BACK MY IRON LIMBS--
--POWERED BY MIGHTY ELECTRONIC TRANSISTORS!
FREE!
BUT IT TOOK-- ALMOST ALL MY CURRENT POWER SUPPLY.
CAN'T PURSUE WONG-CHU-- WITHOUT RECHARGING.
STILL, I CAN'T LET HIM--
WAIT! I'VE GOT IT!
DANGER AMMO-DUMP
15

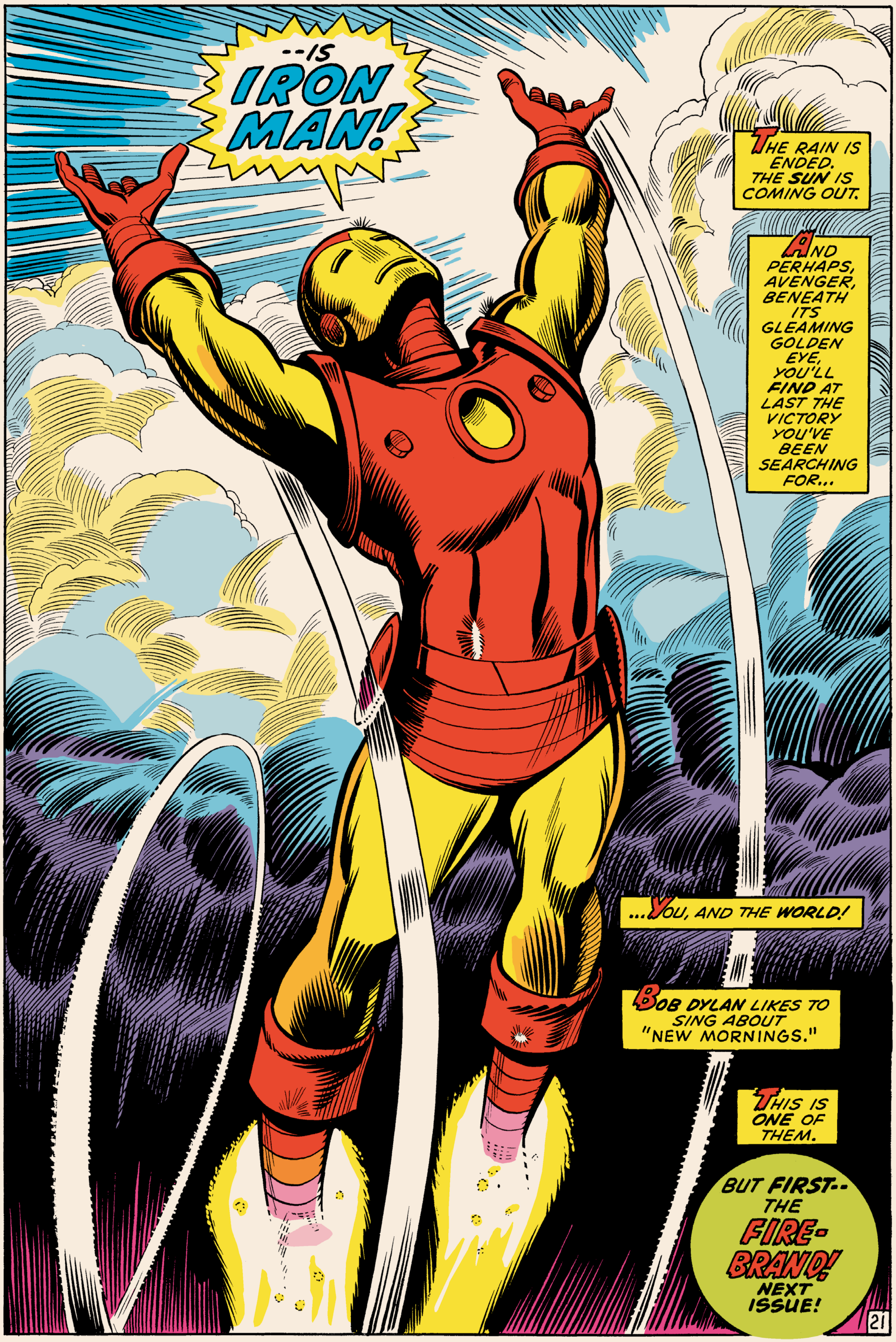

YOU'D PLANNED YOUR ARMORED APPARATUS CAREFULLY, HADN'T YOU, STARK--?
--EVEN DOWN TO THE LUBRICATING APPARATUS WHICH NOW JETTED FORTH A THIN, STRONG STREAM OF OIL...!
I ESTIMATED IT JUST RIGHT!
THE PRESSURE'S JUST GREAT ENOUGH FOR IT TO REACH THAT AMMO DUMP!
DANG AMM DUM
GUARDS! GUARDS!
SLAY THE PRISONERS --NOW!
BROOOM!
16

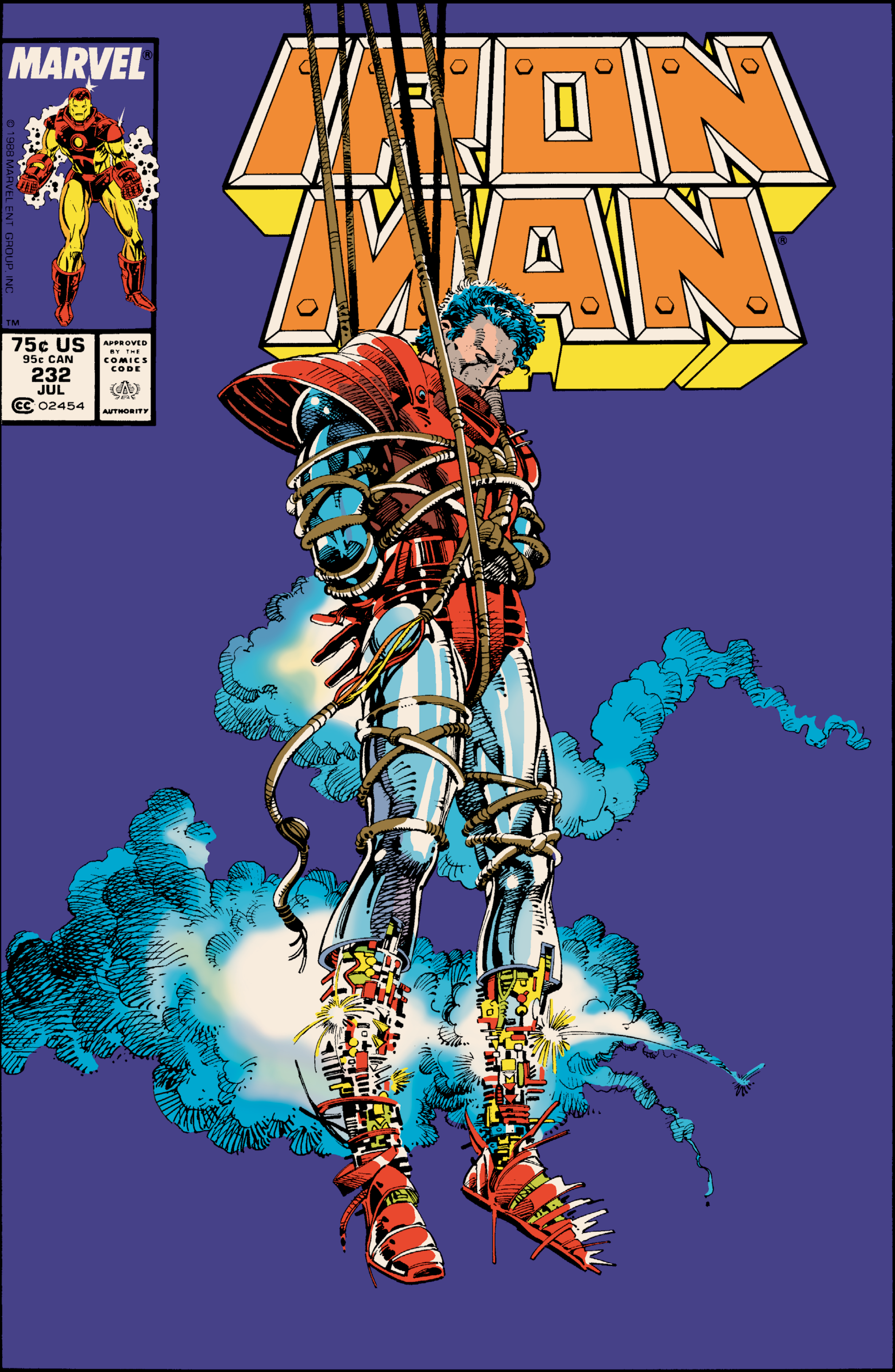

AIEEE! THE WORLD EXPLODES AROUND US!
NOT THE WORLD, YOU FOOLS.
JUST-- THE MAN YOU WORSHIPPED --LIKE A GOD.
WE WORSHIP NO ONE! FLEE! FLEE!
SO MUCH-- FOR THE SECOND-STRINGERS!
BUT--NONE OF THIS--WILL HELP ME--
--IF THERE'S NOT ENOUGH JUICE LEFT IN THIS DYNAMO--TO RECHARGE MY BATTERIES.
FEELING-- FAINT. HAVE TO--
KZZ'T
KZZ'T
KZZ'T
AHHHHH...
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL-- A REAL PICK-ME-UP!
THEN, WHEN THE NEWLY-FREED PRISONERS ALL HAD LEFT, AND YOU STOOD ALONE AMONGST STILL-SMOULDERING CARNAGE...
IT'S ALL OVER NOW.
YOU CAN REST EASY, PROFESSOR YINSEN.
YOU, WHO SACRIFICED YOUR LIFE TO SAVE MINE...
...HAVE BEEN AVENGED!
AS FOR THE IRON MAN-- THAT METALLIC HULK WHO ONCE WAS ANTHONY STARK--WHO KNOWS WHAT DESTINY AWAITS HIM?
TIME ALONE WILL PROVIDE THE ANSWER.
TIME ALONE...
17

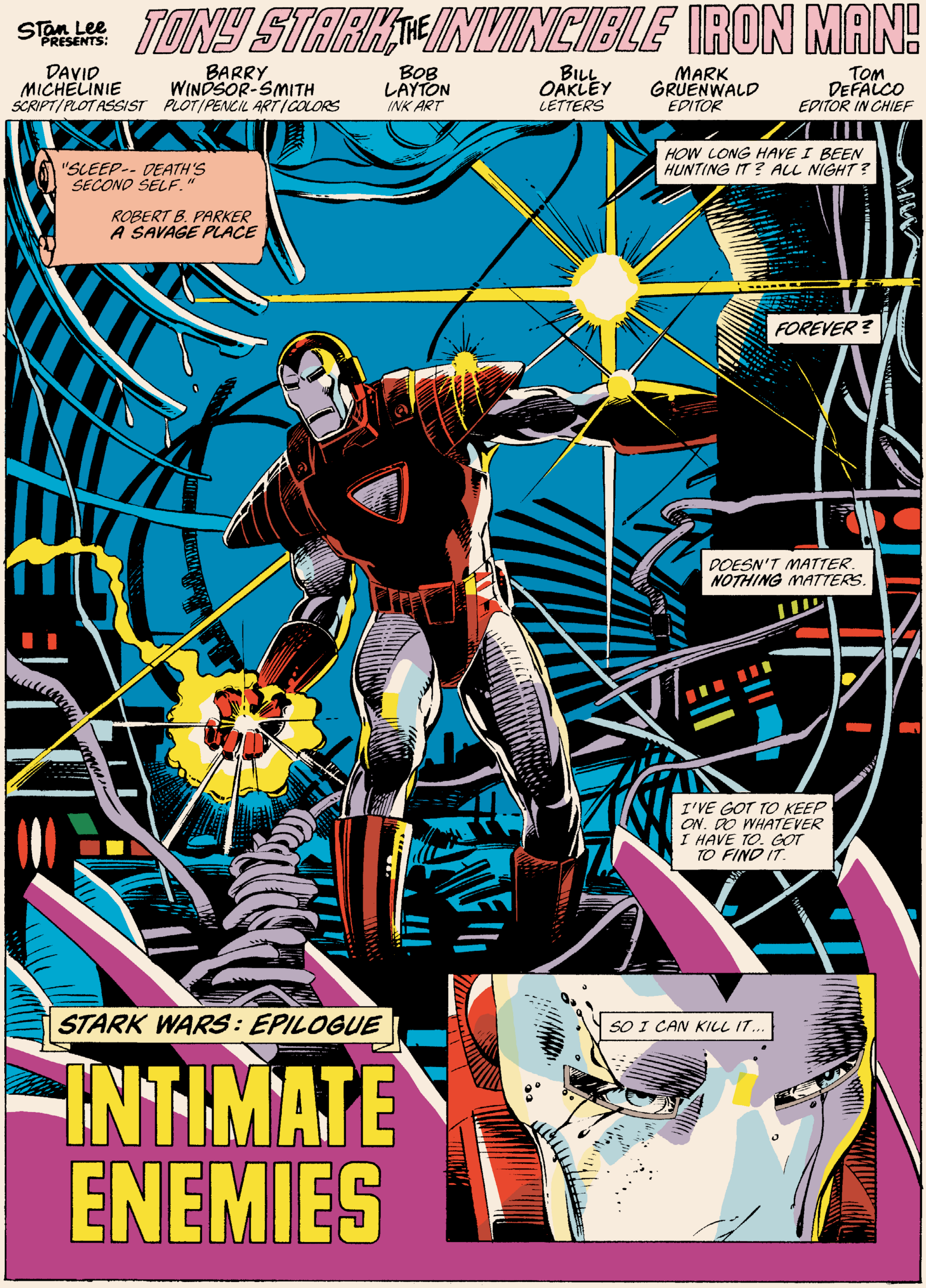

AND YOU'RE STILL WAITING, AREN'T YOU, SHELLHEAD?
WAITING TO LEARN YOUR DESTINY, IF SUCH A THING REALLY EXISTS--
--ANYWHERE EXCEPT IN YOUR MIND.
IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO GIVE IT ALL UP, WOULDN'T IT?
ALL YOU'D HAVE TO DO IS LEAD THE POLICE--OR THE ARMY--THRU THIS REINFORCED STEEL DOOR--
--HAND OVER THESE BLUE-PRINTS TO THEM, AND TAKE A WALK.
THEY SHOW HOW YOU WORKED, RE-WORKED, MODIFIED YOUR ARMOR, AGAIN AND AGAIN...
...TILL IT WAS THE NEARLY-HUMAN FIGHTING MACHINE IT IS TODAY.
THERE ARE A LOT OF LIVES BOUND UP IN THIS ARMOR... AND THIS ROLLED-UP SCRAP OF PAPER...
ENEMIES WHO TRIED TO KILL YOU TO POSSESS ITS POWER...
GIRLS WHOM TONY STARK DARED NOT EMBRACE, FOR FEAR THEY'D LEARN HIS SECRET...
EVEN A FRIEND OR TWO WHO DONNED THE ARMOR, TO HELP YOU OUT OF A JAM...
YES, A LOT OF LIVES, TIN MAN...
AND A FEW DEATHS, TOO.
18

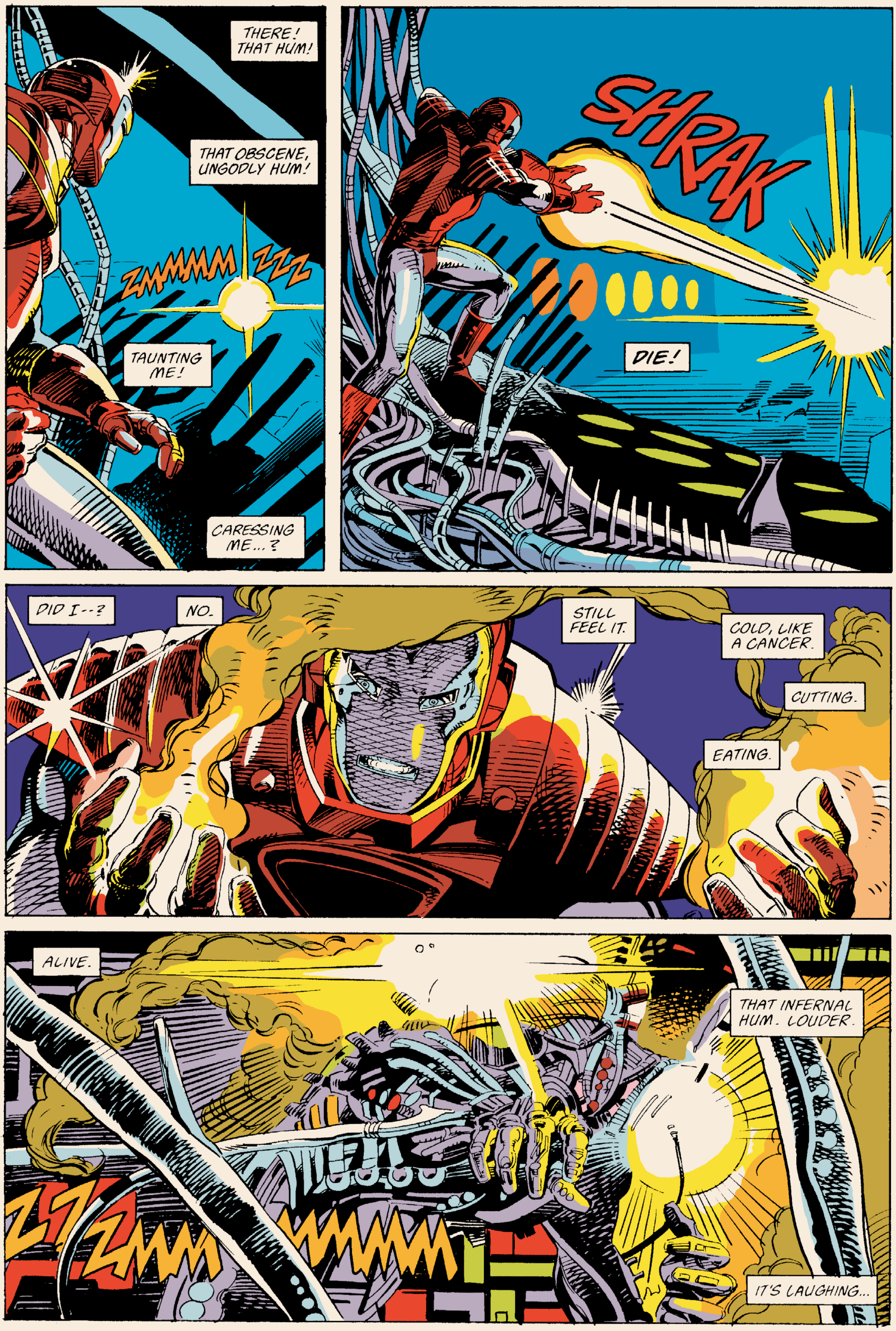

THE GREAT PLANT IS CLOSED NOW...THAT VAST, SPRAWLING ORGANISM WHICH IS THE HUB OF THE NETWORK EMPIRE CALLED STARK INDUSTRIES...
...CLOSED IN MEMORY OF KEVIN O'BRIEN, WHO SHALL EVER BE RECALLED AS FRIEND, NOT FOE...
AND SOMEHOW, YOU FEEL LIKE A GRIM GOLDEN GHOST, WALKING, WALKING...
...WALKING SOFTLY, AS THOUGH NOT TO AWAKEN STILL OTHER GHOSTS...!
RIGHT HERE. IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE...
IN THIS VERY BUILDING, THE TEST MODELS FOR MY FIRST ARMOR WERE CAST AND RE-CAST.
THE FINISHED PRODUCT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PIECED TOGETHER HALF A WORLD AWAY--BUT IT ALL STARTED HERE.
MY ARMOR--AND DOZENS OF OTHER WEAPONS--FOR THE ARMY, FOR SHIELD--
--WEAPONS I'VE SOMETIMES BEEN SORRY I DESIGNED--
--WEAPONS THAT CAN BE USED TO KILL ONE PEOPLE--TO SAVE ANOTHER.
SOMETIMES I'M OUT IN A CROWD, AND I HEAR SOMEBODY'S SCORNFUL WHISPER:
"MUNITIONS-MAKER!"
AND I FIND MYSELF PONDERING EVERY ACTION I EVER MADE.
BUT MAYBE THAT'S ALL TO THE GOOD.
WHEN A MAN STOPS PONDERING HIS ACTIONS--CEASES TO WEIGH AND JUDGE HIS EVERY MOTIVE--
MAYBE THAT'S WHEN HE'S REALLY IN TROUBLE.
STARK
ALL OF WHICH DOESN'T QUITE ANSWER MY CURRENT DILEMMA--THE QUESTION I KEEP ASKING MYSELF--
"MUST THERE BE AN IRON MAN? AND WHY?"
STRANGE I SHOULD WIND UP ASKING IT--HERE.
19

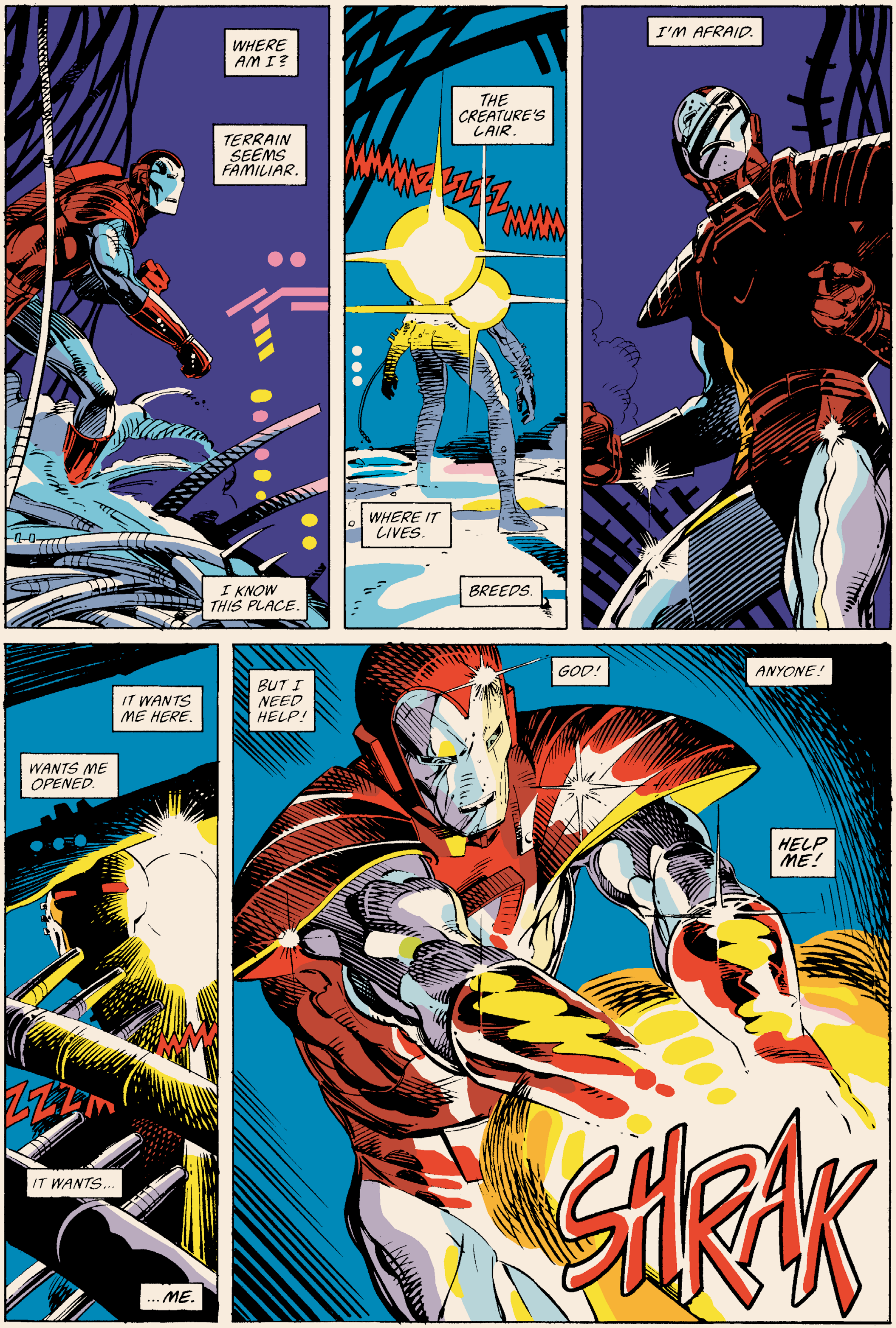

HERE, IN FRONT OF THE BOMBPROOF CASING WHICH HOUSES MY *FIRST* SUIT OF ARMOR.
GREY. IT USED TO BE GREY.
THEN I MADE IT *GOLD*, SO IT WOULDN'T MAKE ME LOOK SO *SINISTER*-- WOULDN'T *FRIGHTEN* PEOPLE I WAS TRYING TO HELP.
BUT...I DON'T KNOW...
MAYBE THOSE PEOPLE WERE *RIGHT* TO BE FRIGHTENED...AND I WAS *WRONG* TO THINK A GOLDEN GALAHAD MADE ANY SENSE IN *1972!*
HOW ABOUT IT, STARK? *HOW ABOUT IT??*
NO! YOU'VE BEEN *FOOLING* YOURSELF, TONY--TRYING TO TAKE THE *SIMPLE* WAY OUT.
IT'D BE EASY-- *TOO* EASY--TO GIVE IN TO THE *GILBERTS* OF THE WORLD.
BECAUSE FOR EVERY PERSON *KILLED* BECAUSE HE ENCOUNTERED IRON MAN-- A HUNDRED MORE HAVE *LIVED!*
YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AT IT *ALL WRONG*, STARK!
YOU'RE *NOT* A CIVILIAN. YOU'RE A *SOLDIER*-- ALBEIT A *RELUCTANT* ONE...
...A SOLDIER IN THE BATTLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS... *HUMAN DIGNITY!*
THAT'S A WAR THAT'S BEING FOUGHT *EVERY* PLACE, *EVERY* DAY...
...A WAR THAT'S *GOT* TO BE WON, SOME-DAY, *SOME-HOW*...
AND ONE MAN WHO'S GOT TO *HELP* WIN IT...
20

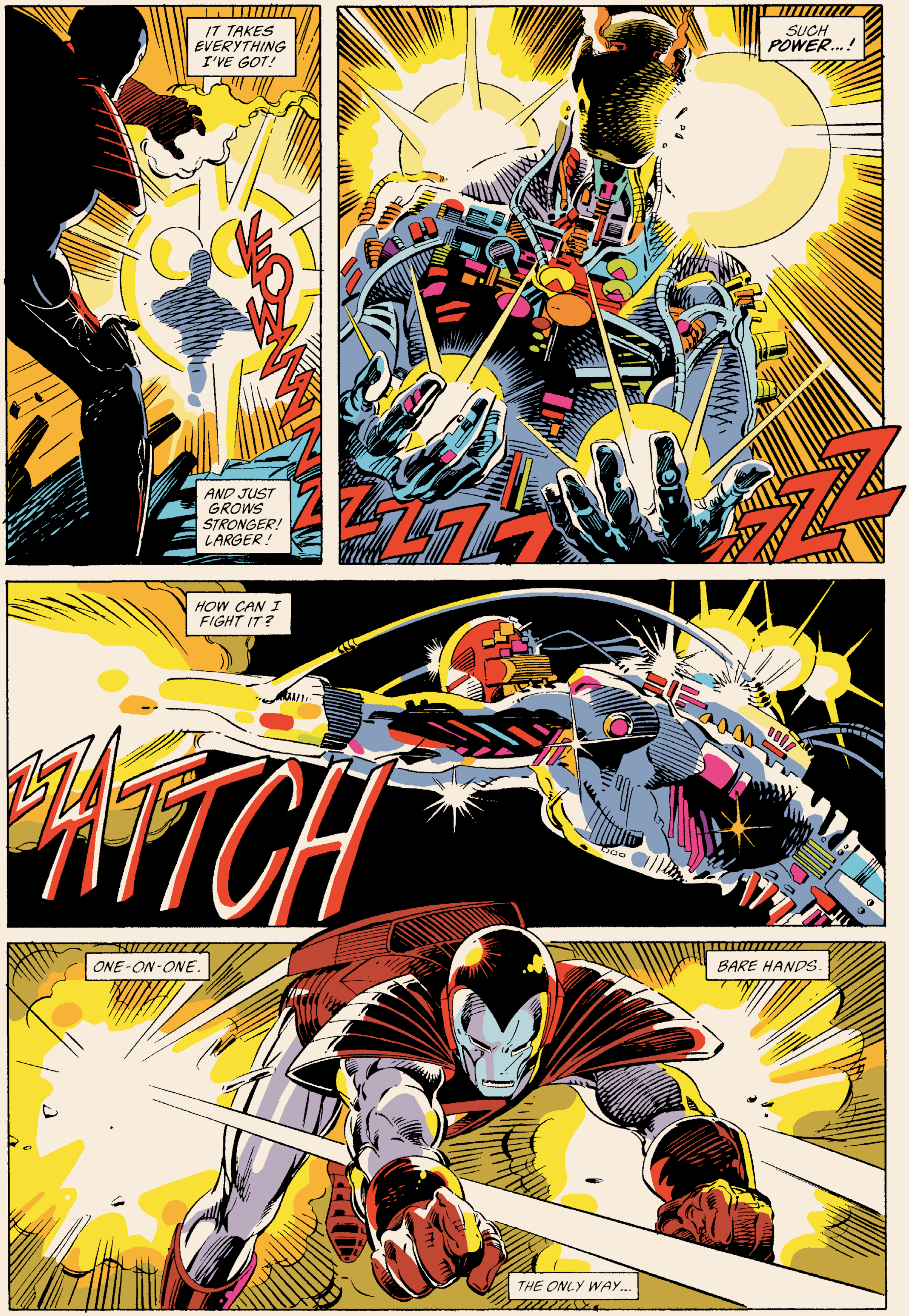

--IS IRON MAN!
THE RAIN IS ENDED. THE SUN IS COMING OUT.
AND PERHAPS, AVENGER, BENEATH ITS GLEAMING GOLDEN EYE, YOU'LL FIND AT LAST THE VICTORY YOU'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR...
...YOU, AND THE WORLD!
BOB DYLAN LIKES TO SING ABOUT "NEW MORNINGS."
THIS IS ONE OF THEM.
BUT FIRST-- THE FIRE-BRAND! NEXT ISSUE!
21

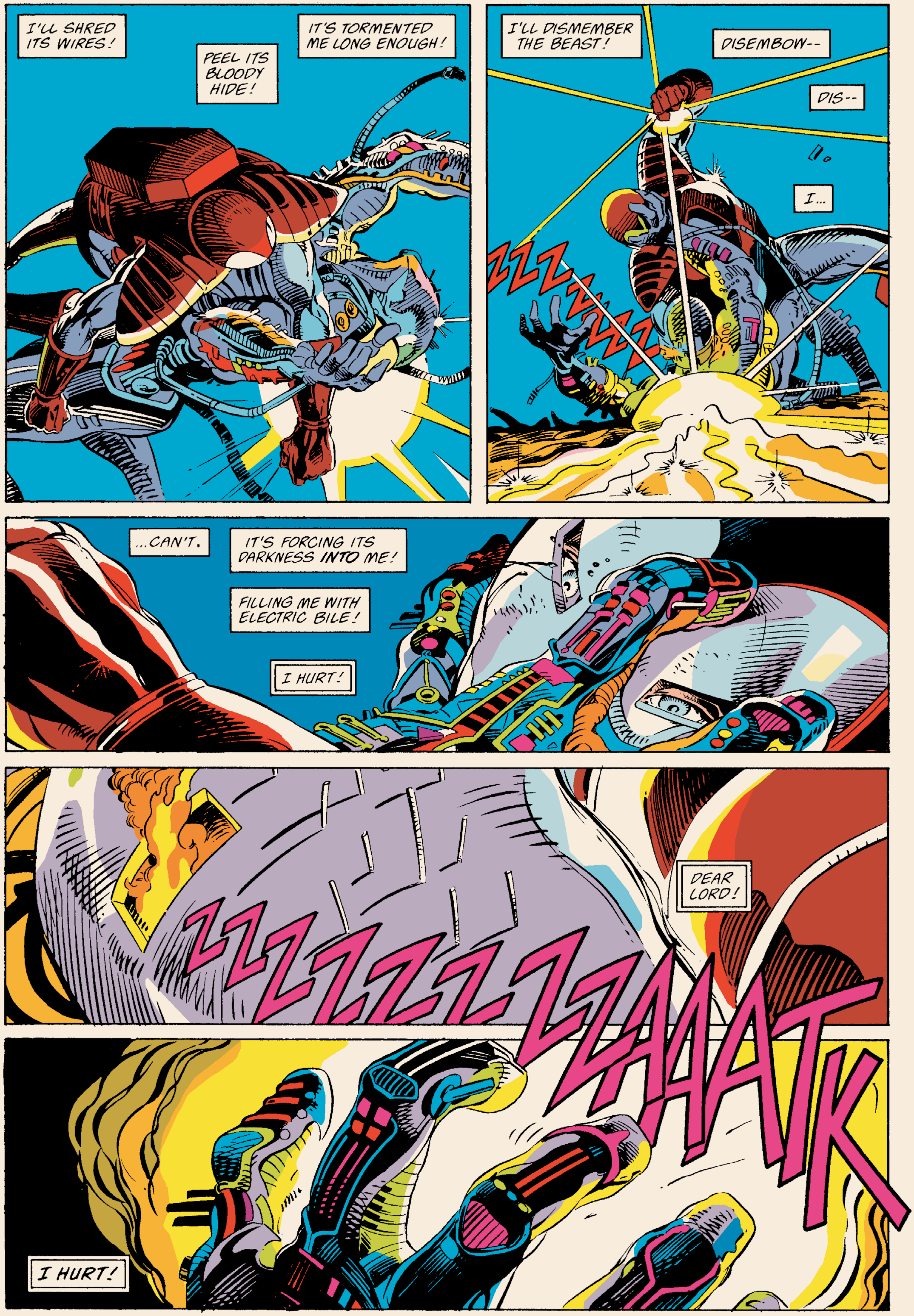

MARVEL®
© 1988 MARVEL ENT. GROUP, INC.
TM
75¢ US
95¢ CAN
232
JUL
CC 02454
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IRON MAN®

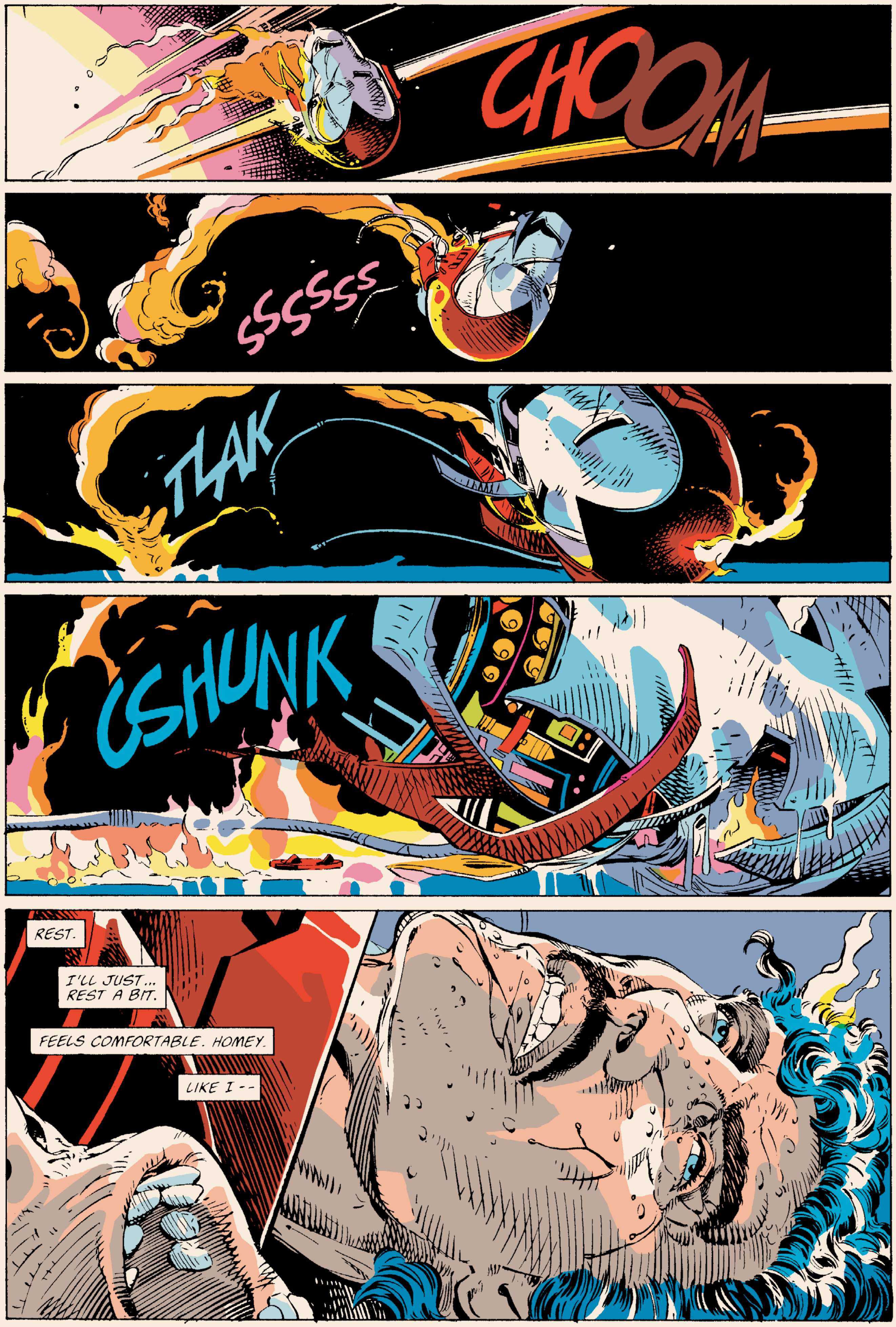

Stan Lee PRESENTS:
TONY STARK, THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!
DAVID MICHELINIE SCRIPT/PLOT ASSIST
BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH PLOT/PENCIL ART/COLORS
BOB LAYTON INK ART
BILL OAKLEY LETTERS
MARK GRUENWALD EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF
"SLEEP-- DEATH'S SECOND SELF." ROBERT B. PARKER A SAVAGE PLACE
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN HUNTING IT? ALL NIGHT?
FOREVER?
DOESN'T MATTER. NOTHING MATTERS.
I'VE GOT TO KEEP ON. DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO. GOT TO FIND IT.
SO I CAN KILL IT...
STARK WARS: EPILOGUE
INTIMATE ENEMIES

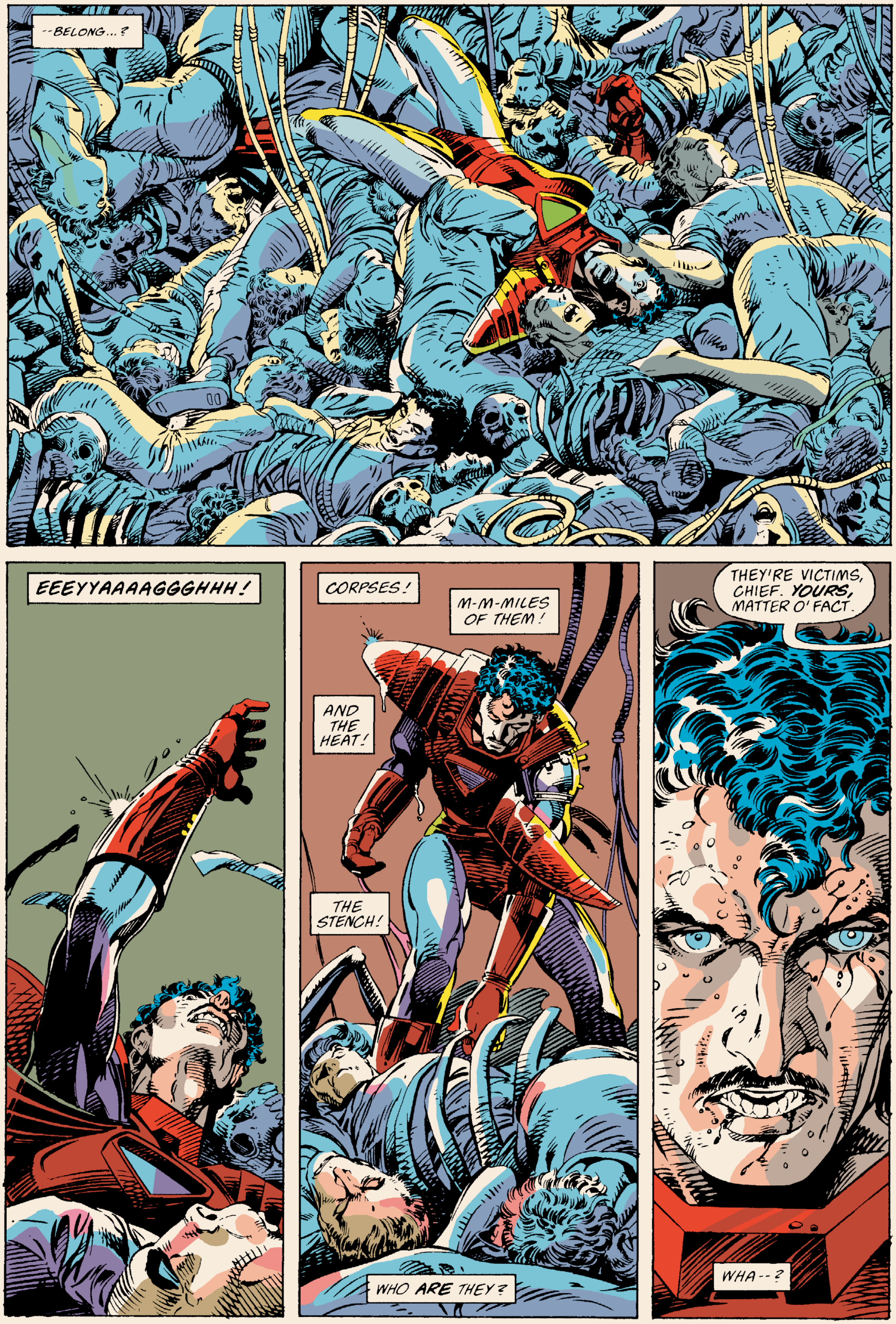

THERE! THAT HUM!
THAT OBSCENE, UNGODLY HUM!
ZMMMM ZZZ
TAUNTING ME!
CARESSING ME...?
SHRAK
DIE!
DID I--?
NO.
STILL FEEL IT.
COLD, LIKE A CANCER.
CUTTING.
EATING.
ALIVE.
THAT INFERNAL HUM. LOUDER.
ZZZMMMMMMM
IT'S LAUGHING...

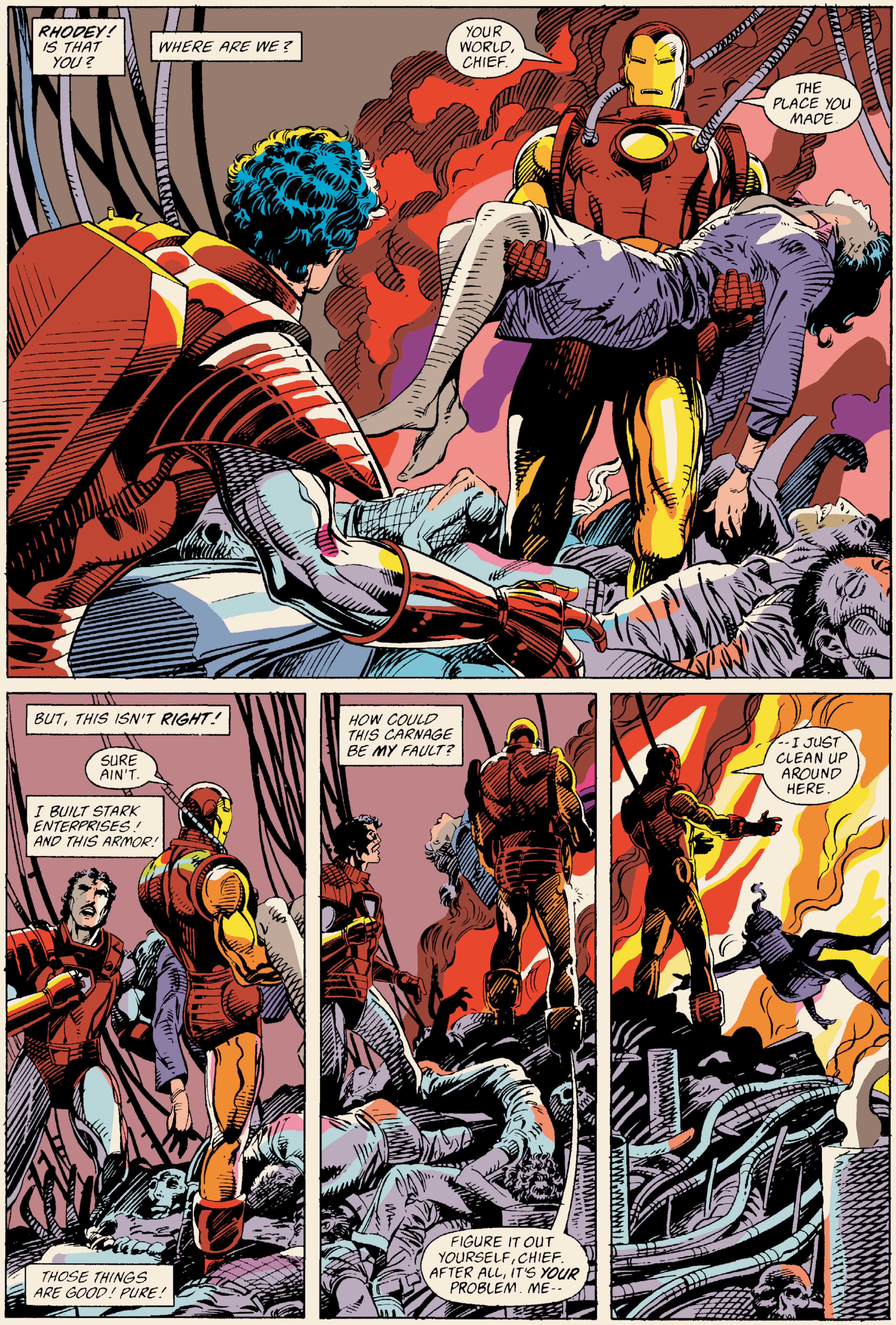

WHERE AM I?
TERRAIN SEEMS FAMILIAR.
I KNOW THIS PLACE.
THE CREATURE'S LAIR.
MMMMZZZZZMMM
WHERE IT LIVES.
BREEDS.
I'M AFRAID.
IT WANTS ME HERE.
WANTS ME OPENED.
ZZZZM
IT WANTS...
...ME.
BUT I NEED HELP!
GOD!
ANYONE!
HELP ME!
SHRAK

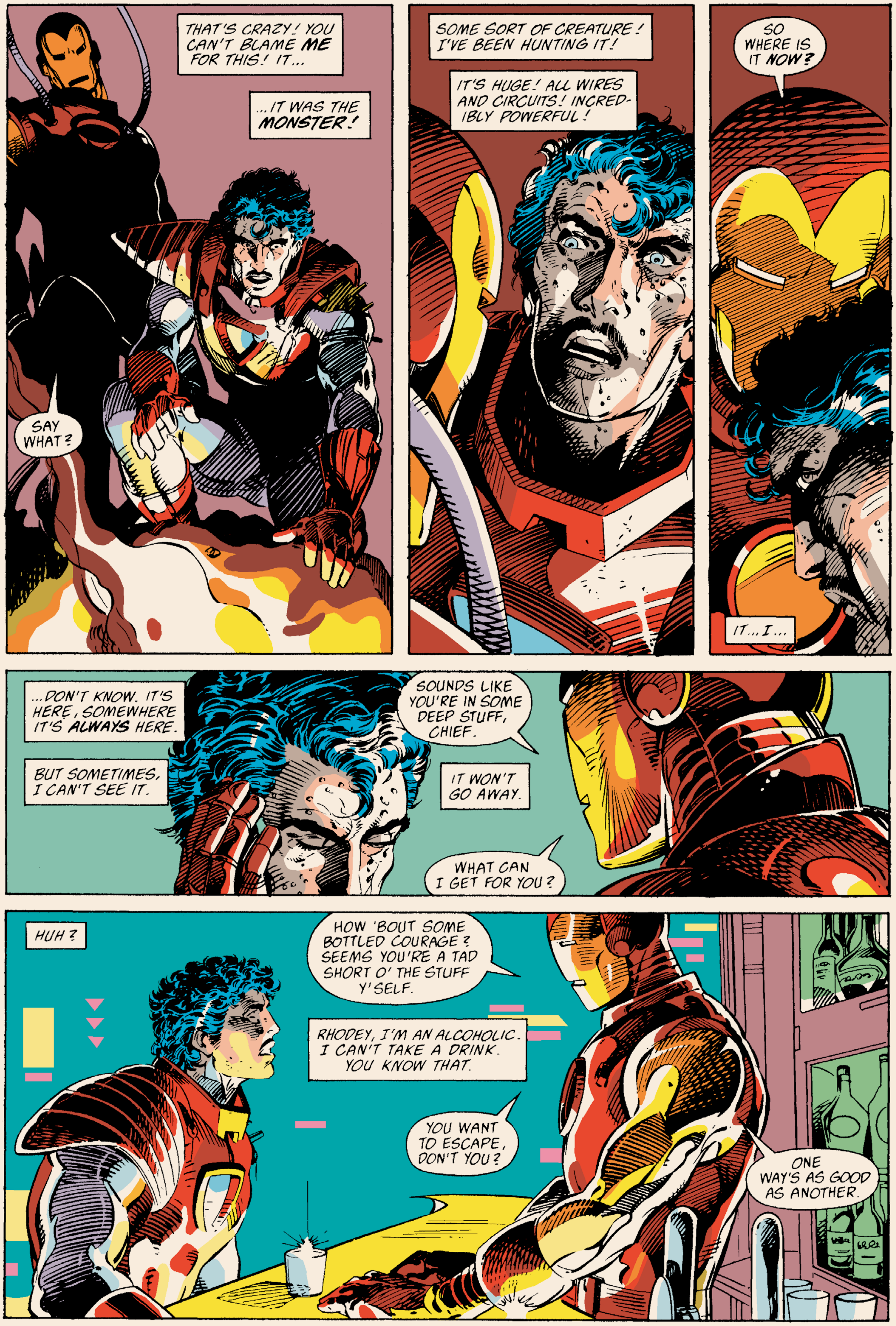

IT TAKES EVERYTHING I'VE GOT!
VEOWZZZZZ
AND JUST GROWS STRONGER! LARGER!
SUCH POWER...!
ZZZZZZZZZ
HOW CAN I FIGHT IT?
ZZATTCH
ONE-ON-ONE.
BARE HANDS.
THE ONLY WAY...

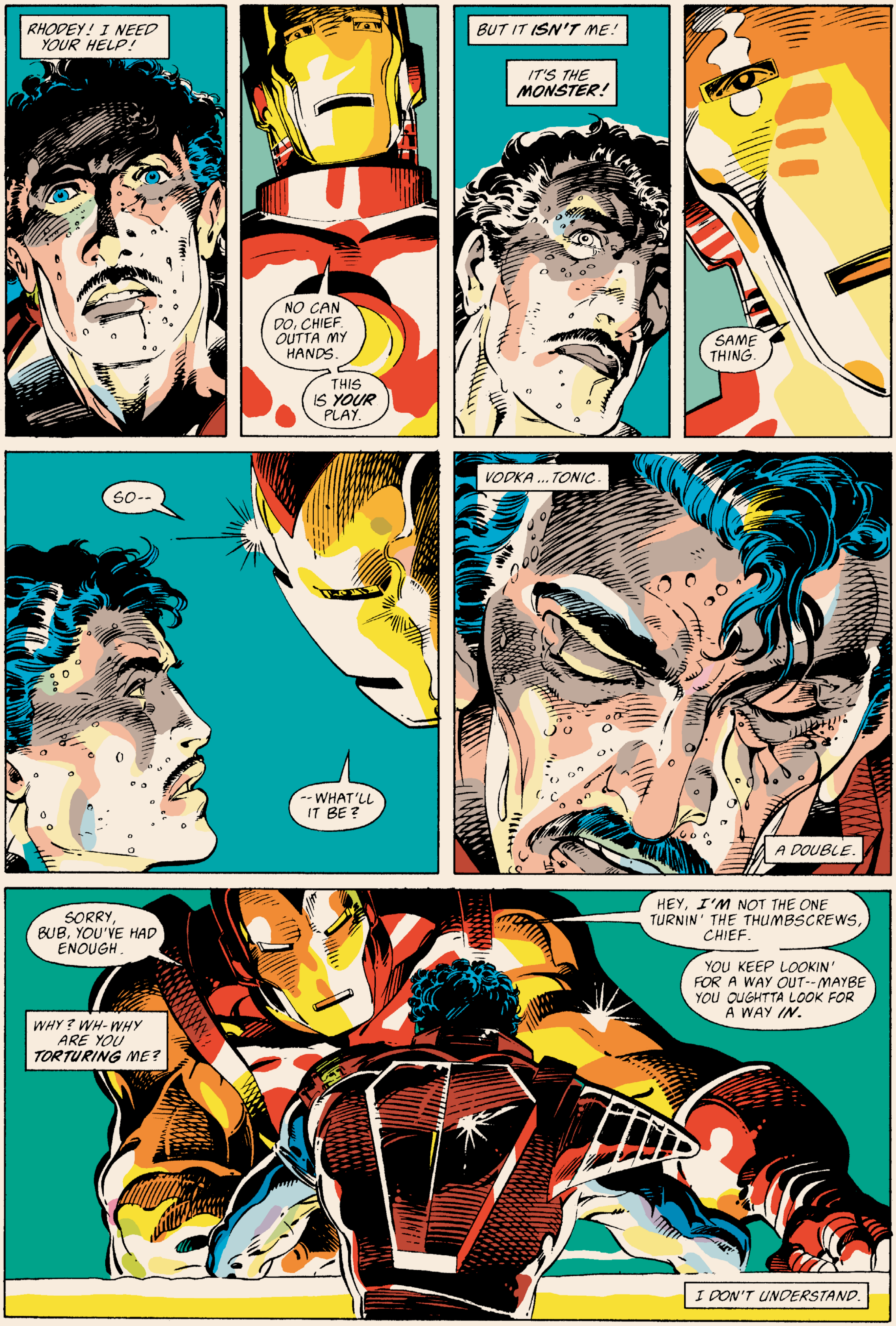

I'LL SHRED ITS WIRES!
PEEL ITS BLOODY HIDE!
IT'S TORMENTED ME LONG ENOUGH!
I'LL DISMEMBER THE BEAST!
DISEMBOW--
DIS--
ZZZZWWWW
I...
...CAN'T.
IT'S FORCING ITS DARKNESS INTO ME!
FILLING ME WITH ELECTRIC BILE!
I HURT!
DEAR LORD!
ZZZZZZZZZZZAAATK
I HURT!

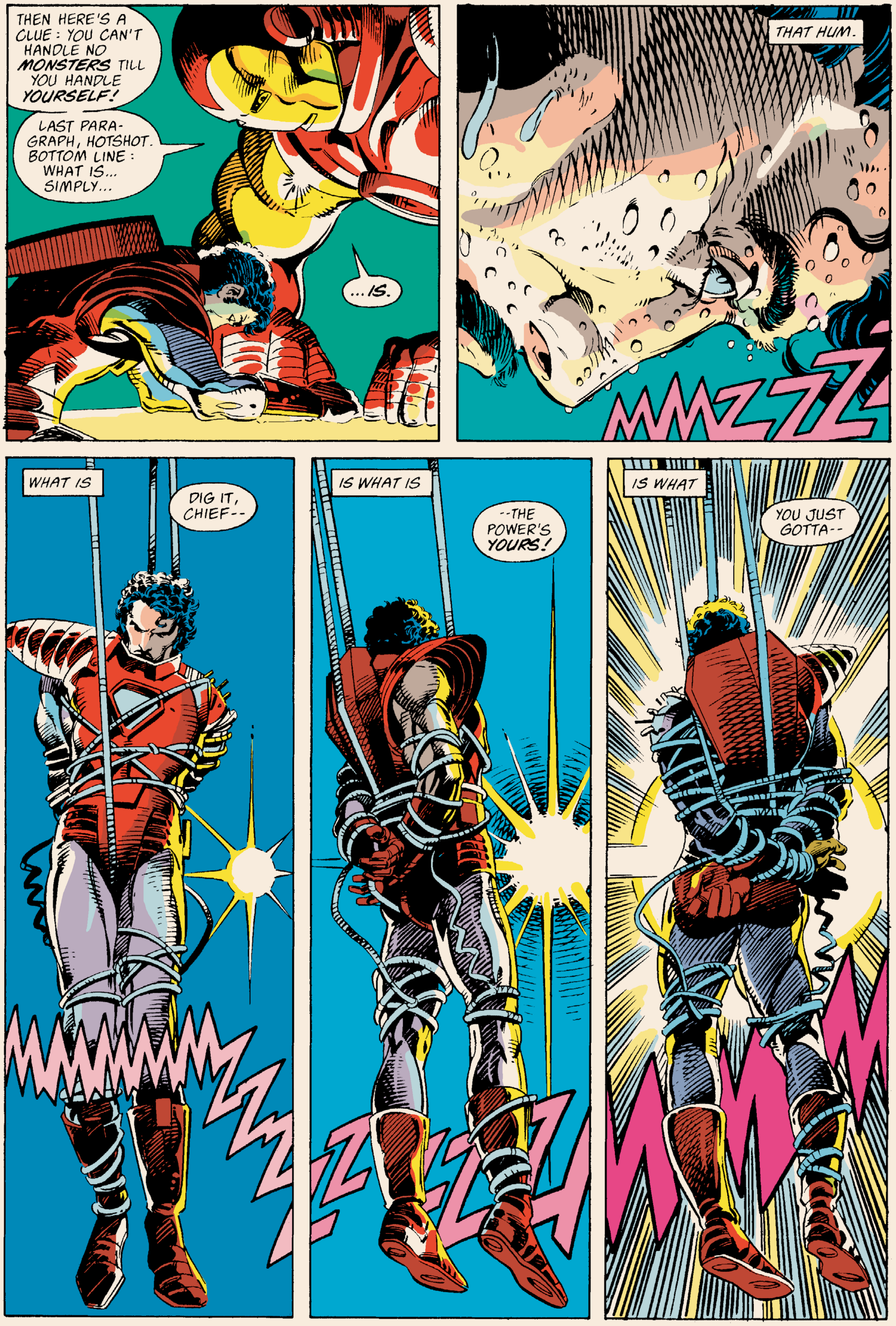

CHOOM
SSSSSS
TLAK
CSHUNK
REST.
I'LL JUST... REST A BIT.
FEELS COMFORTABLE. HOMEY.
LIKE I --

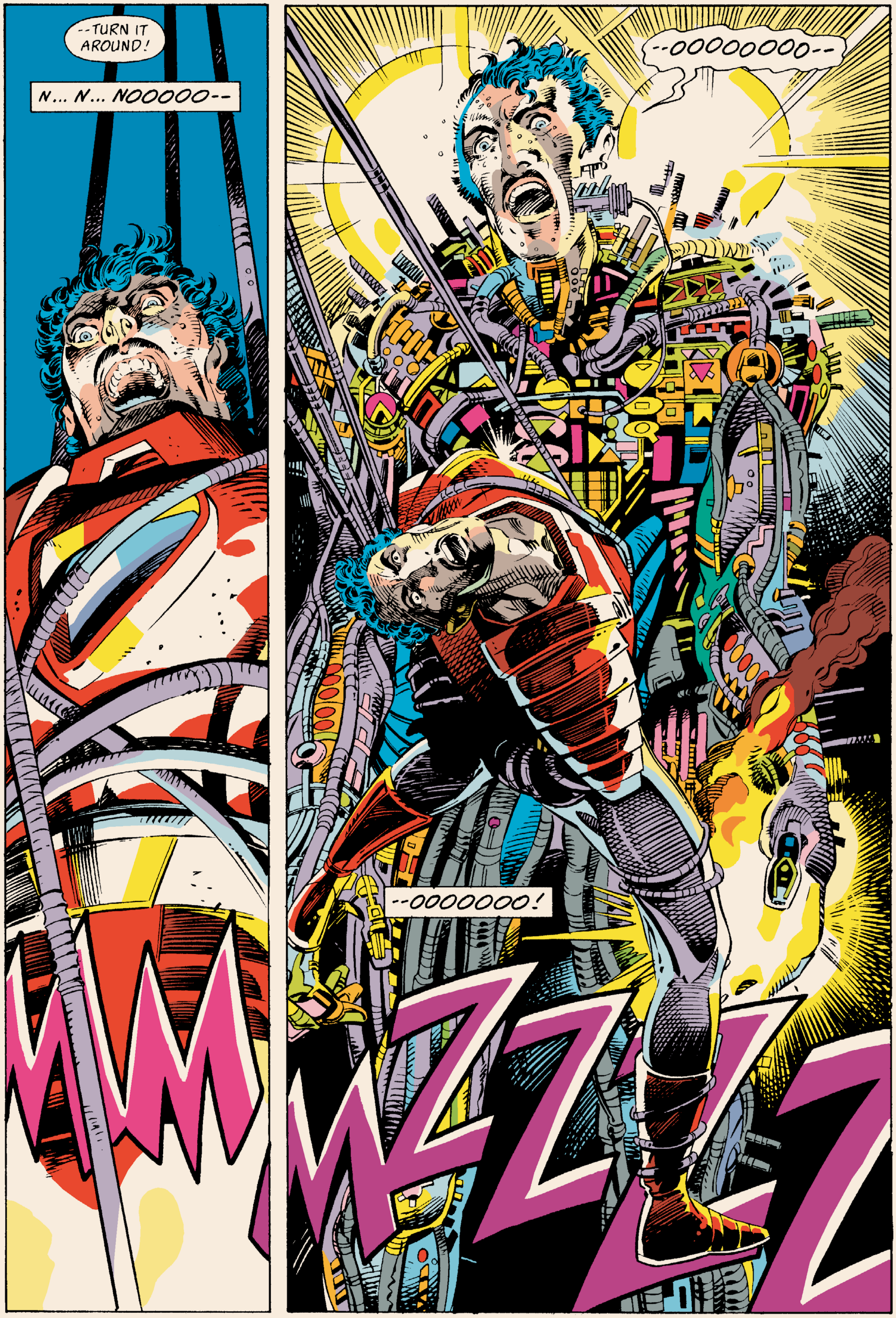

--BELONG...?
EEEYYAAAAGGGHHH!
CORPSES!
M-M-MILES OF THEM!
AND THE HEAT!
THE STENCH!
WHO ARE THEY?
THEY'RE VICTIMS, CHIEF. YOURS, MATTER O' FACT.
WHA--?

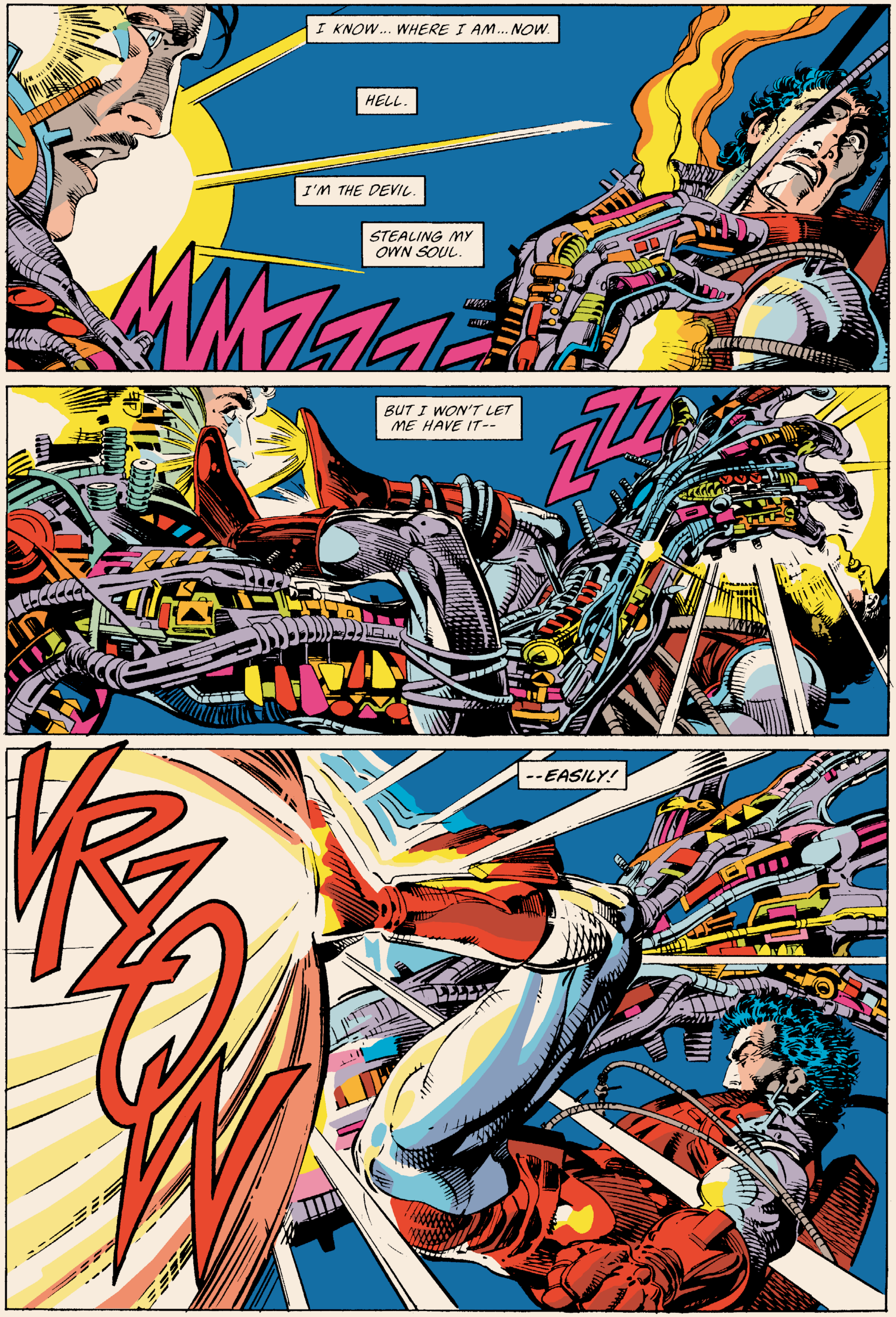

RHODEY! IS THAT YOU?
WHERE ARE WE?
YOUR WORLD, CHIEF.
THE PLACE YOU MADE.
BUT, THIS ISN'T **RIGHT**!
SURE AIN'T.
I BUILT STARK ENTERPRISES! AND THIS ARMOR!
THOSE THINGS ARE GOOD! PURE!
HOW COULD THIS CARNAGE BE **MY** FAULT?
FIGURE IT OUT YOURSELF, CHIEF. AFTER ALL, IT'S **YOUR** PROBLEM. ME--
--I JUST CLEAN UP AROUND HERE.

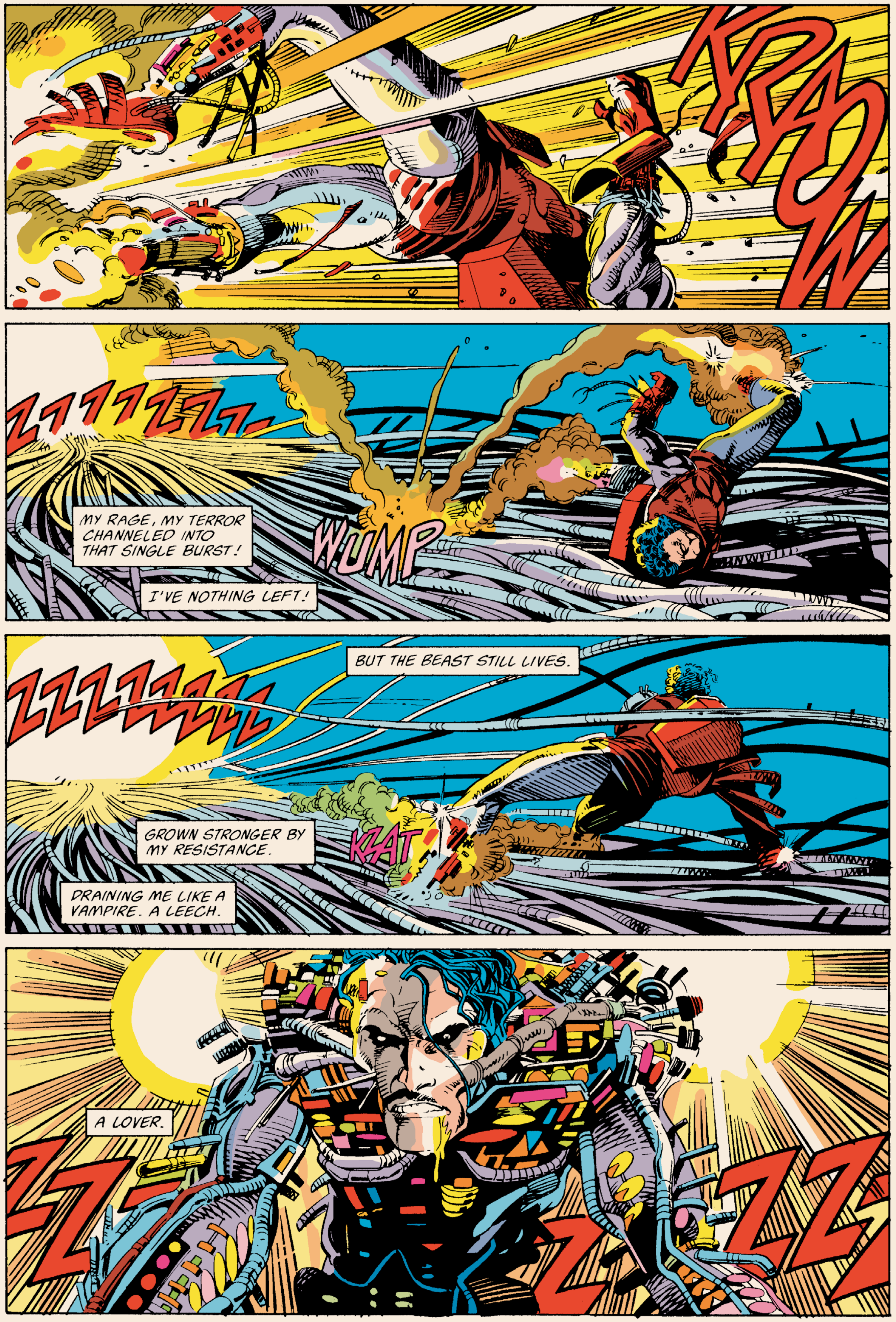

THAT'S CRAZY! YOU CAN'T BLAME **ME** FOR THIS! IT...
...IT WAS THE **MONSTER!**
SAY WHAT?
SOME SORT OF CREATURE! I'VE BEEN HUNTING IT!
IT'S HUGE! ALL WIRES AND CIRCUITS! INCREDIBLY POWERFUL!
SO WHERE IS IT **NOW?**
IT... I...
...DON'T KNOW. IT'S HERE, SOMEWHERE. IT'S **ALWAYS** HERE.
BUT SOMETIMES, I CAN'T SEE IT.
SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE IN SOME DEEP STUFF, CHIEF.
IT WON'T GO AWAY.
WHAT CAN I GET FOR YOU?
HUH?
HOW 'BOUT SOME BOTTLED COURAGE? SEEMS YOU'RE A TAD SHORT O' THE STUFF Y'SELF.
RHODEY, I'M AN ALCOHOLIC. I CAN'T TAKE A DRINK. YOU KNOW THAT.
YOU WANT TO ESCAPE, DON'T YOU?
ONE WAY'S AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.

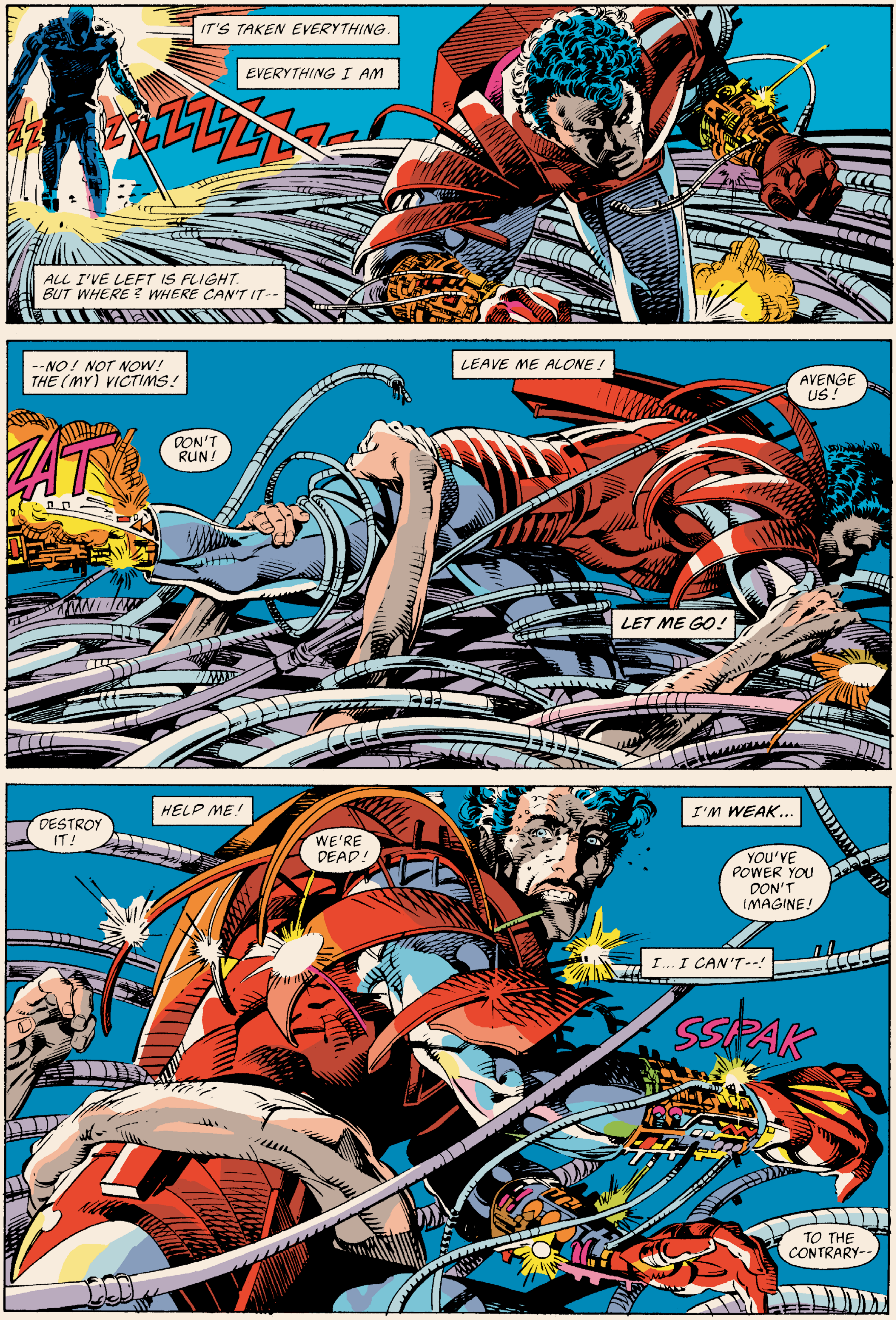

RHODEY! I NEED YOUR HELP!
NO CAN DO, CHIEF. OUTTA MY HANDS.
THIS IS *YOUR* PLAY.
BUT IT *ISN'T* ME!
IT'S THE *MONSTER!*
SAME THING.
SO--
--WHAT'LL IT BE?
VODKA...TONIC.
A DOUBLE.
SORRY, BUB, YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH.
HEY, *I'M* NOT THE ONE TURNIN' THE THUMBSCREWS, CHIEF.
YOU KEEP LOOKIN' FOR A WAY OUT--MAYBE YOU OUGHTTA LOOK FOR A WAY *IN*.
WHY? WH-WHY ARE YOU *TORTURING* ME?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

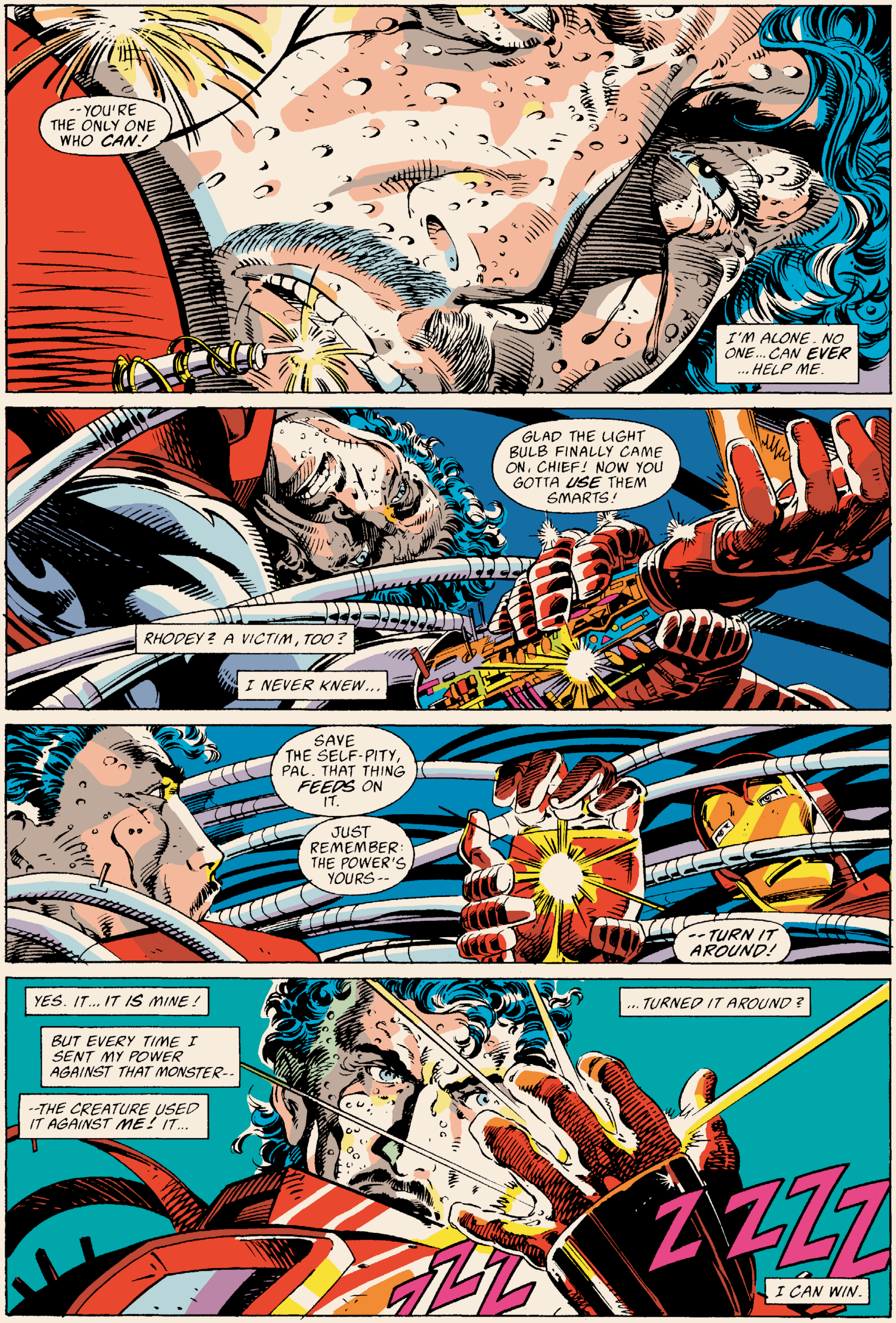

THEN HERE'S A CLUE: YOU CAN'T HANDLE NO **MONSTERS** TILL YOU HANDLE **YOURSELF!**
LAST PARAGRAPH, HOTSHOT. BOTTOM LINE: WHAT IS... SIMPLY...
...IS.
THAT HUM.
MMZZZ
WHAT IS
DIG IT, CHIEF--
MMMMMMMZZZ
IS WHAT IS
--THE POWER'S **YOURS!**
ZZZZZ
IS WHAT
YOU JUST GOTTA--
MMMM

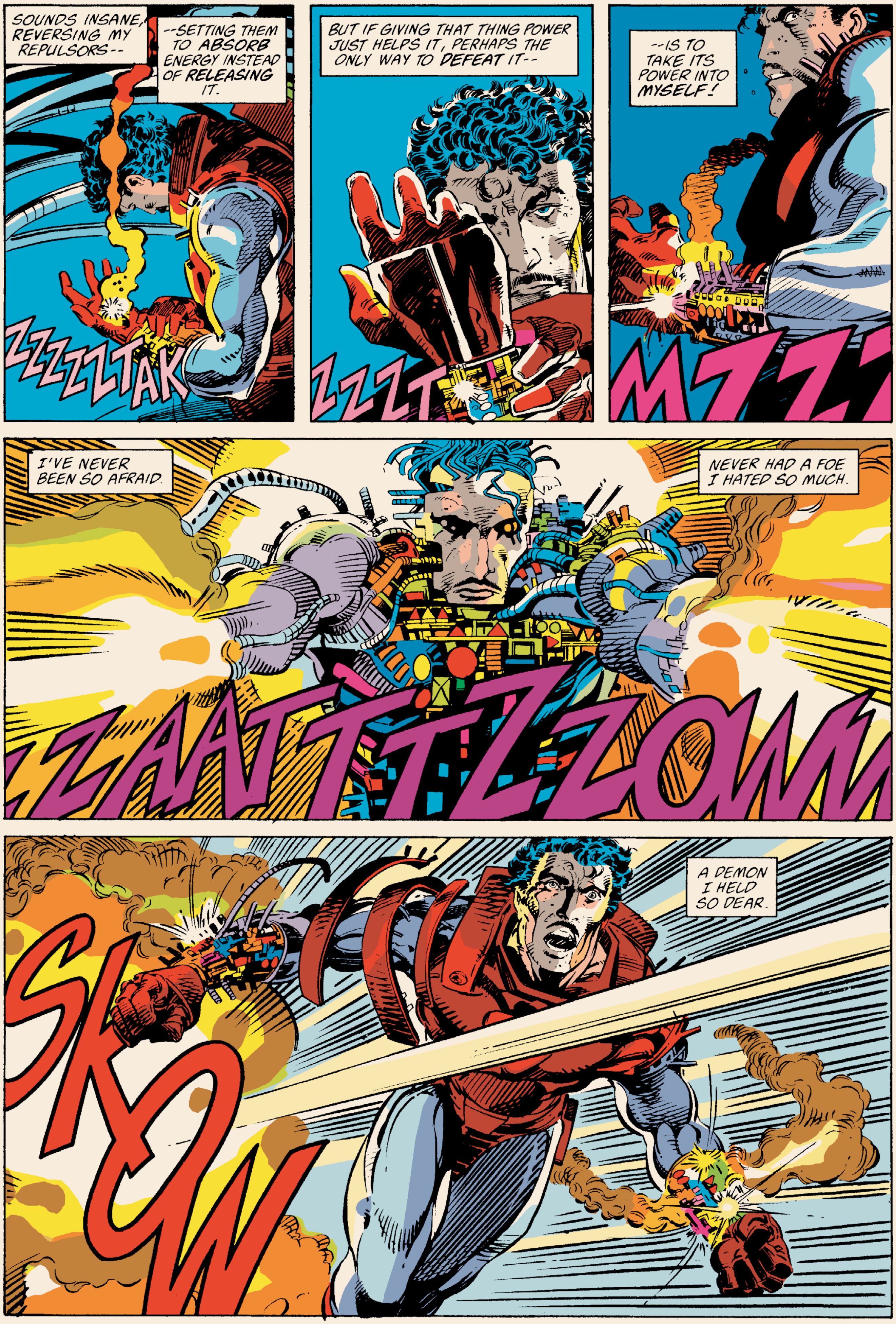

--TURN IT AROUND!
N... N... NOOOOO--
--OOOOOOOO--
--OOOOOOO!
MM
MZZZZ

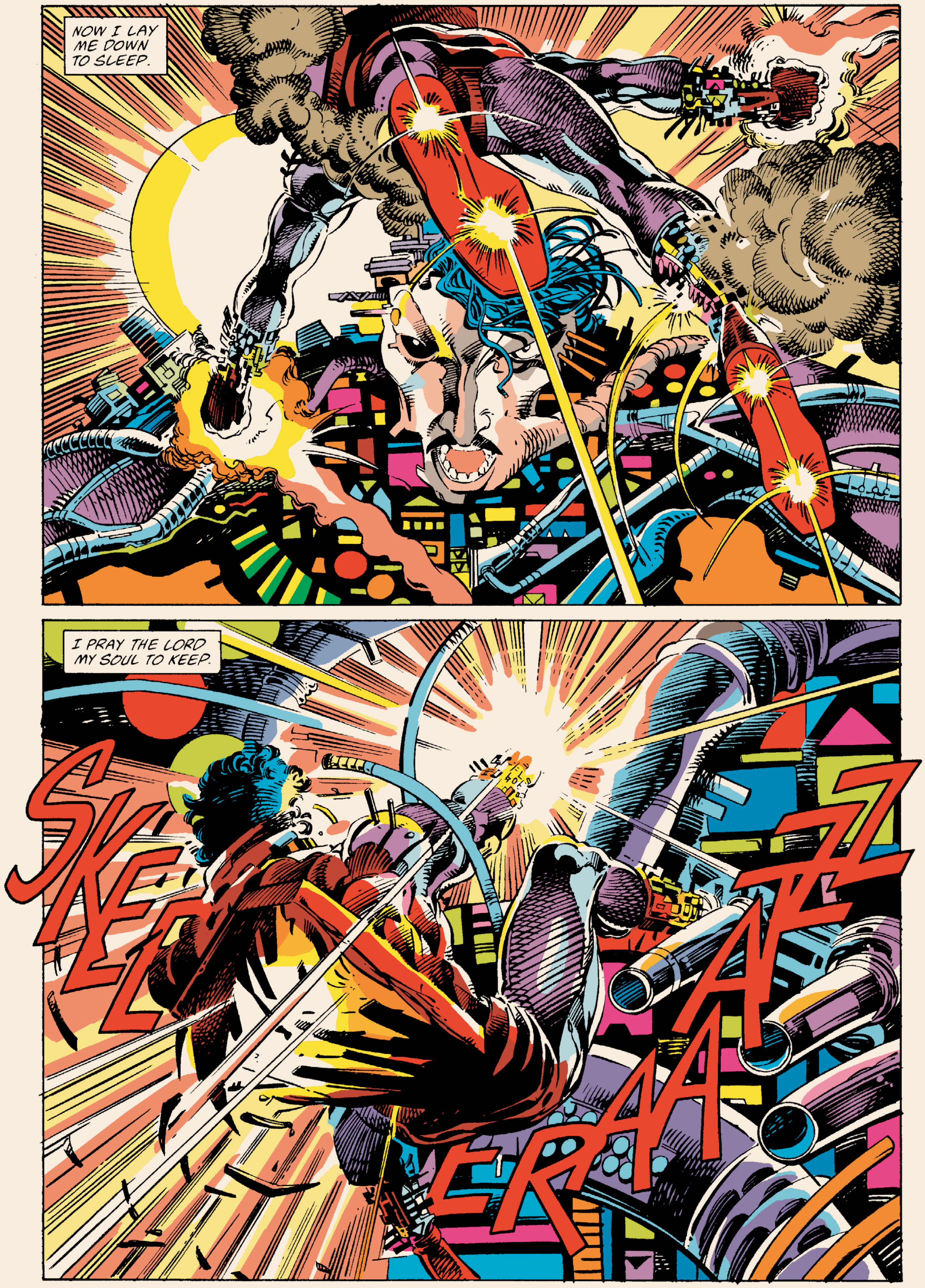

I KNOW... WHERE I AM... NOW.
HELL.
I'M THE DEVIL.
STEALING MY OWN SOUL.
MMZZZZ
BUT I WON'T LET ME HAVE IT--
ZZZ
VRZOW
--EASILY!

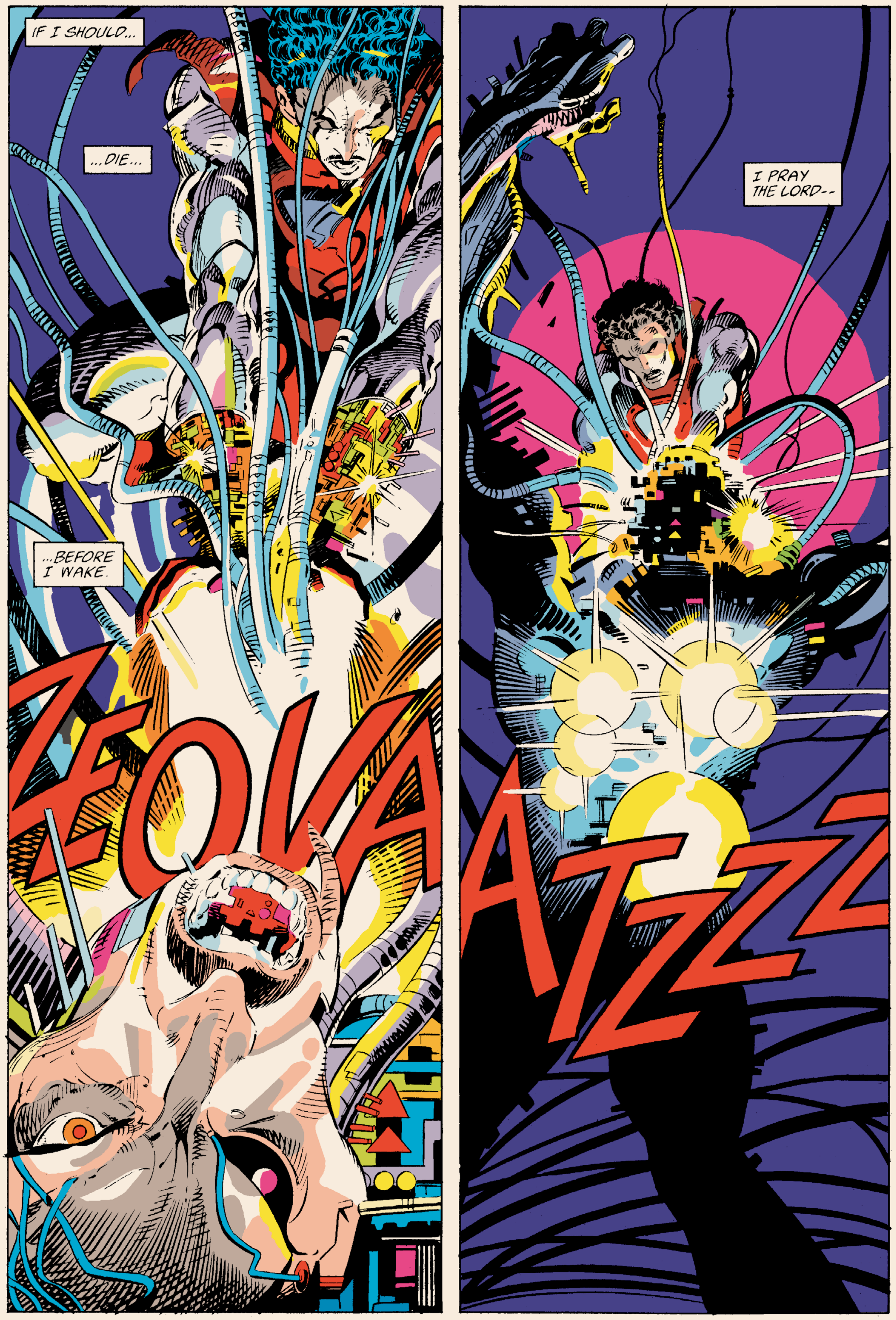

KRAOW
ZZZZZZZZ-
MY RAGE, MY TERROR CHANNELED INTO THAT SINGLE BURST!
WUMP
I'VE NOTHING LEFT!
BUT THE BEAST STILL LIVES.
ZZZZZZZZ
GROWN STRONGER BY MY RESISTANCE.
KRAT!
DRAINING ME LIKE A VAMPIRE. A LEECH.
A LOVER.
ZZ-
ZZ

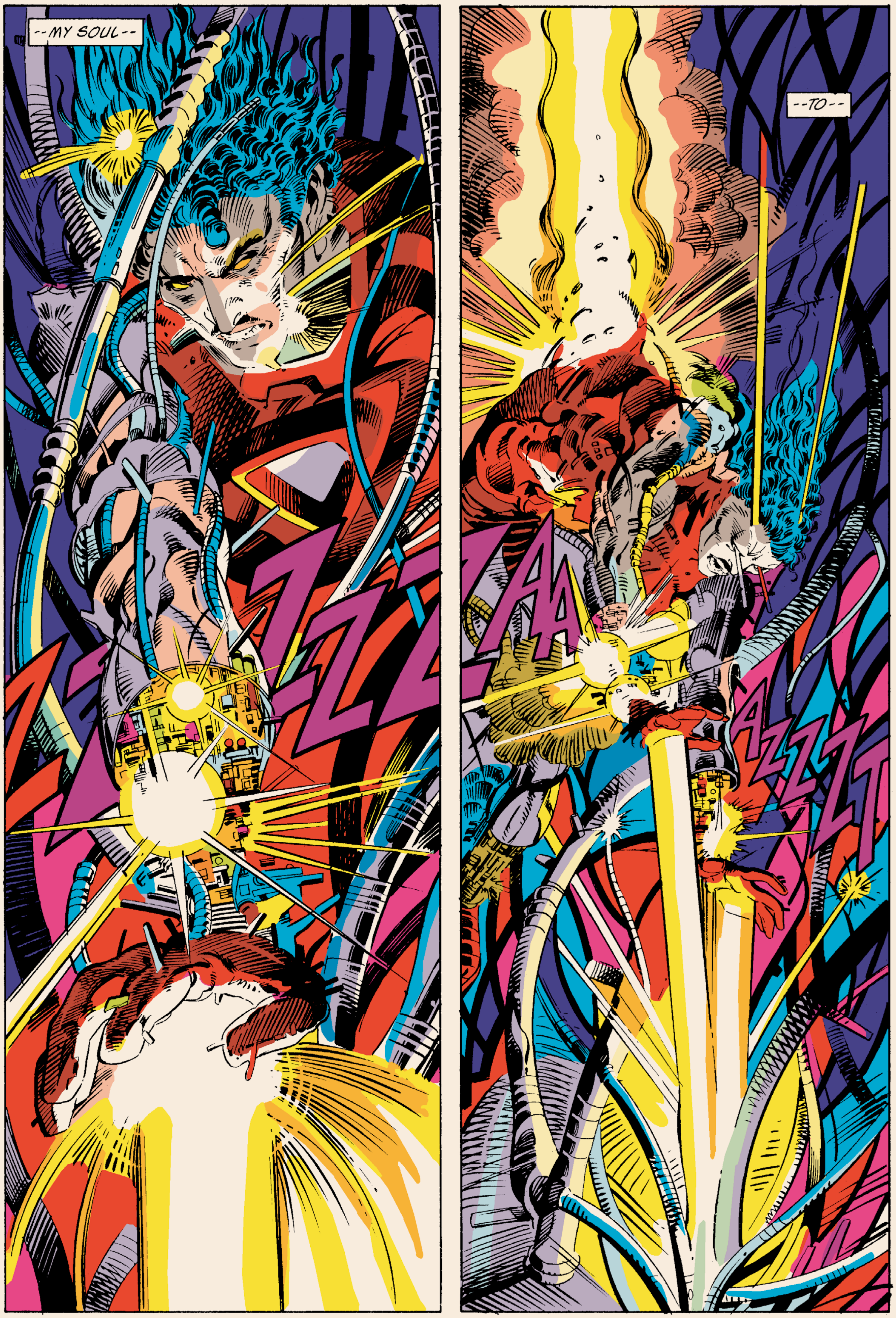

IT'S TAKEN EVERYTHING.
EVERYTHING I AM
ZZ ZZZZZZZ--
ALL I'VE LEFT IS FLIGHT. BUT WHERE? WHERE CAN'T IT--
--NO! NOT NOW! THE (MY) VICTIMS!
LEAVE ME ALONE!
AVENGE US!
ZAT
DON'T RUN!
LET ME GO!
DESTROY IT!
HELP ME!
WE'RE DEAD!
I'M WEAK...
YOU'VE POWER YOU DON'T IMAGINE!
I... I CAN'T--!
SSPAK
TO THE CONTRARY--

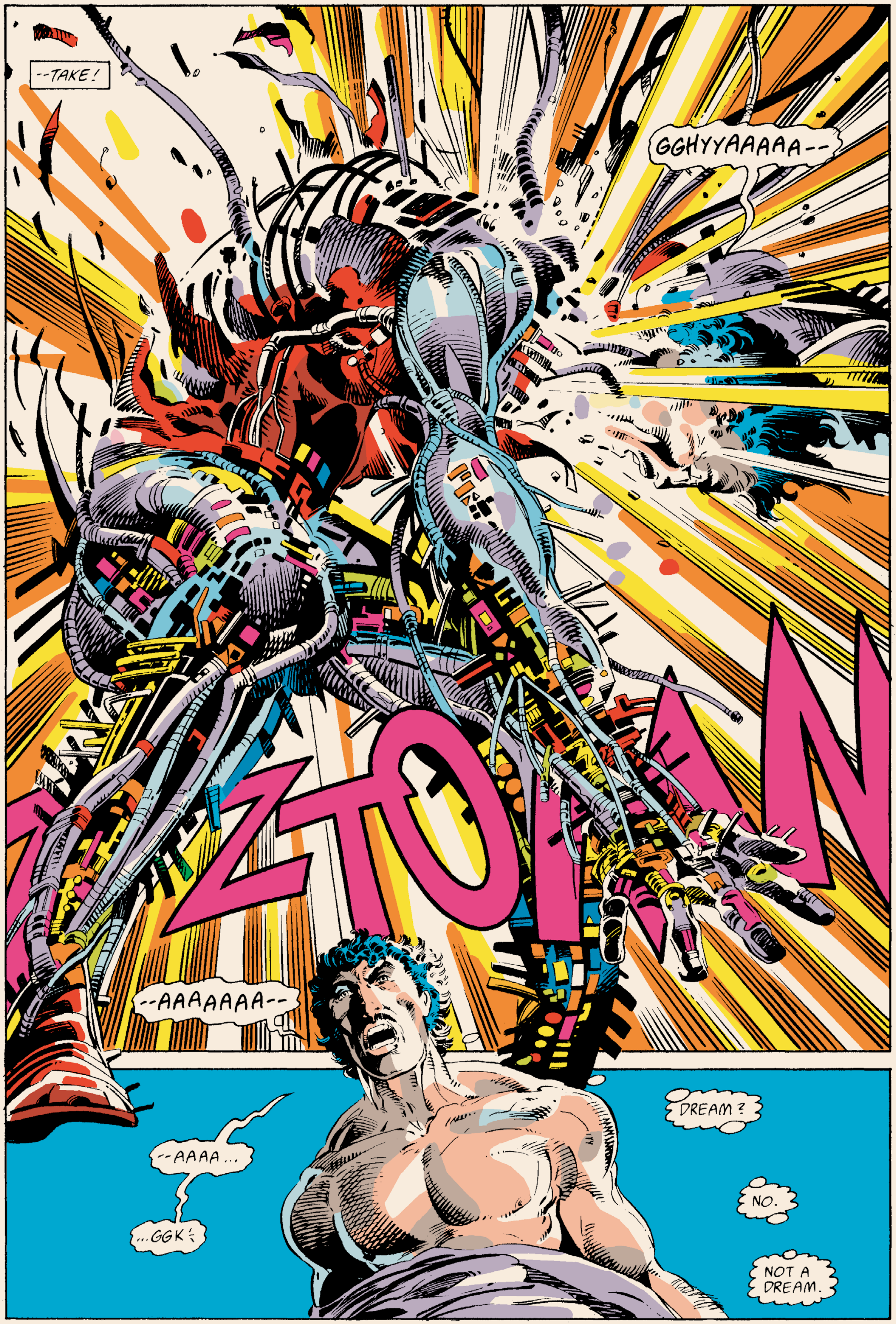

--YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO *CAN!*
I'M ALONE. NO ONE... CAN *EVER* ...HELP ME.
GLAD THE LIGHT BULB FINALLY CAME ON, CHIEF! NOW YOU GOTTA *USE* THEM SMARTS!
RHODEY? A VICTIM, TOO?
I NEVER KNEW...
SAVE THE SELF-PITY, PAL. THAT THING *FEEDS* ON IT.
JUST REMEMBER: THE POWER'S YOURS--
--TURN IT AROUND!
YES. IT... IT *IS* MINE!
BUT EVERY TIME I SENT MY POWER AGAINST THAT MONSTER--
--THE CREATURE USED IT AGAINST *ME!* IT...
...TURNED IT AROUND?
ZZZ
ZZZZ
I CAN WIN.

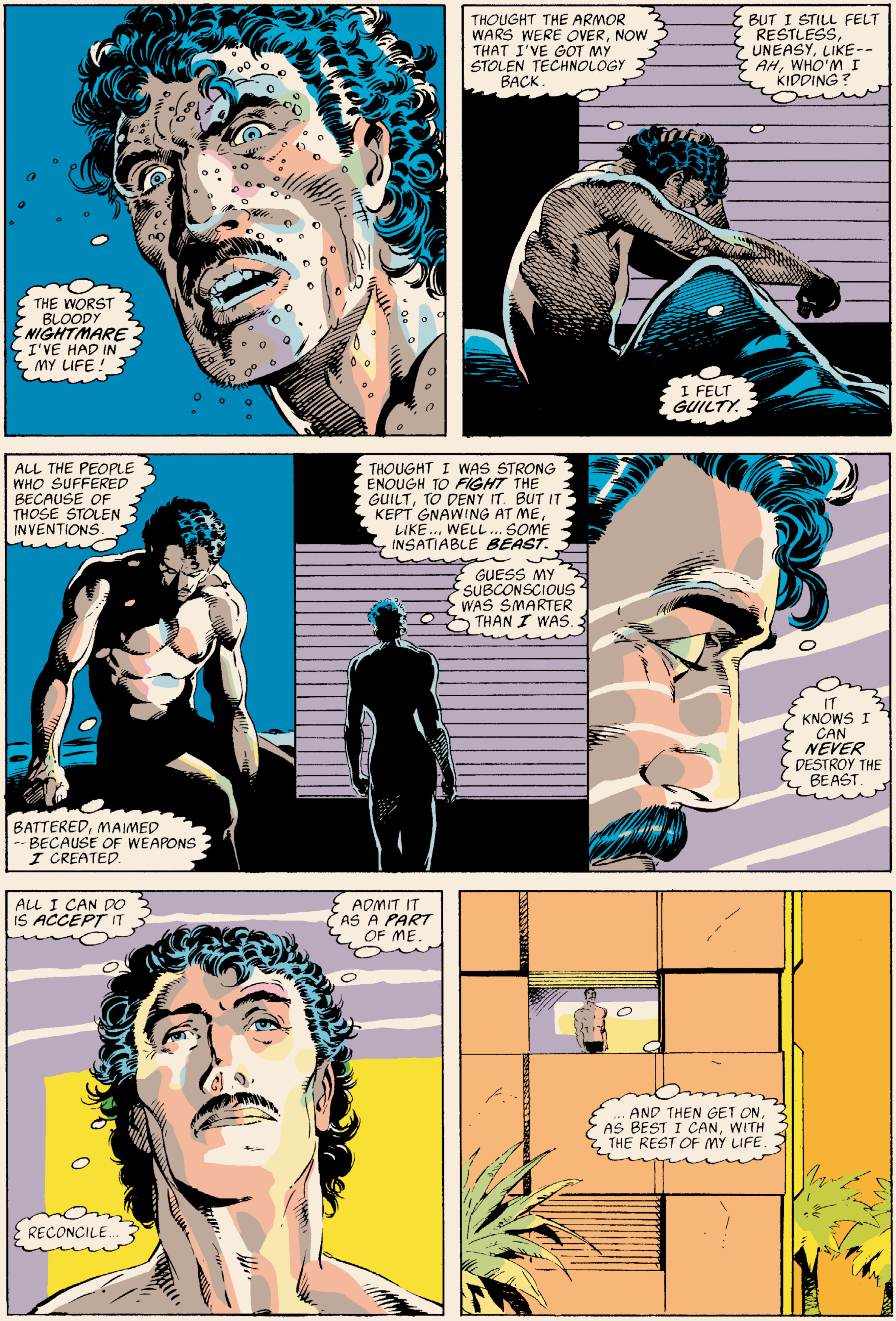

SOUNDS INSANE, REVERSING MY REPULSORS--
--SETTING THEM TO ABSORB ENERGY INSTEAD OF RELEASING IT.
ZZZZZZTAK
BUT IF GIVING THAT THING POWER JUST HELPS IT, PERHAPS THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEAT IT--
ZZZZT
--IS TO TAKE ITS POWER INTO MYSELF!
MZZZ
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO AFRAID.
NEVER HAD A FOE I HATED SO MUCH.
ZZAATTTZZOOM
A DEMON I HELD SO DEAR.
SKOW

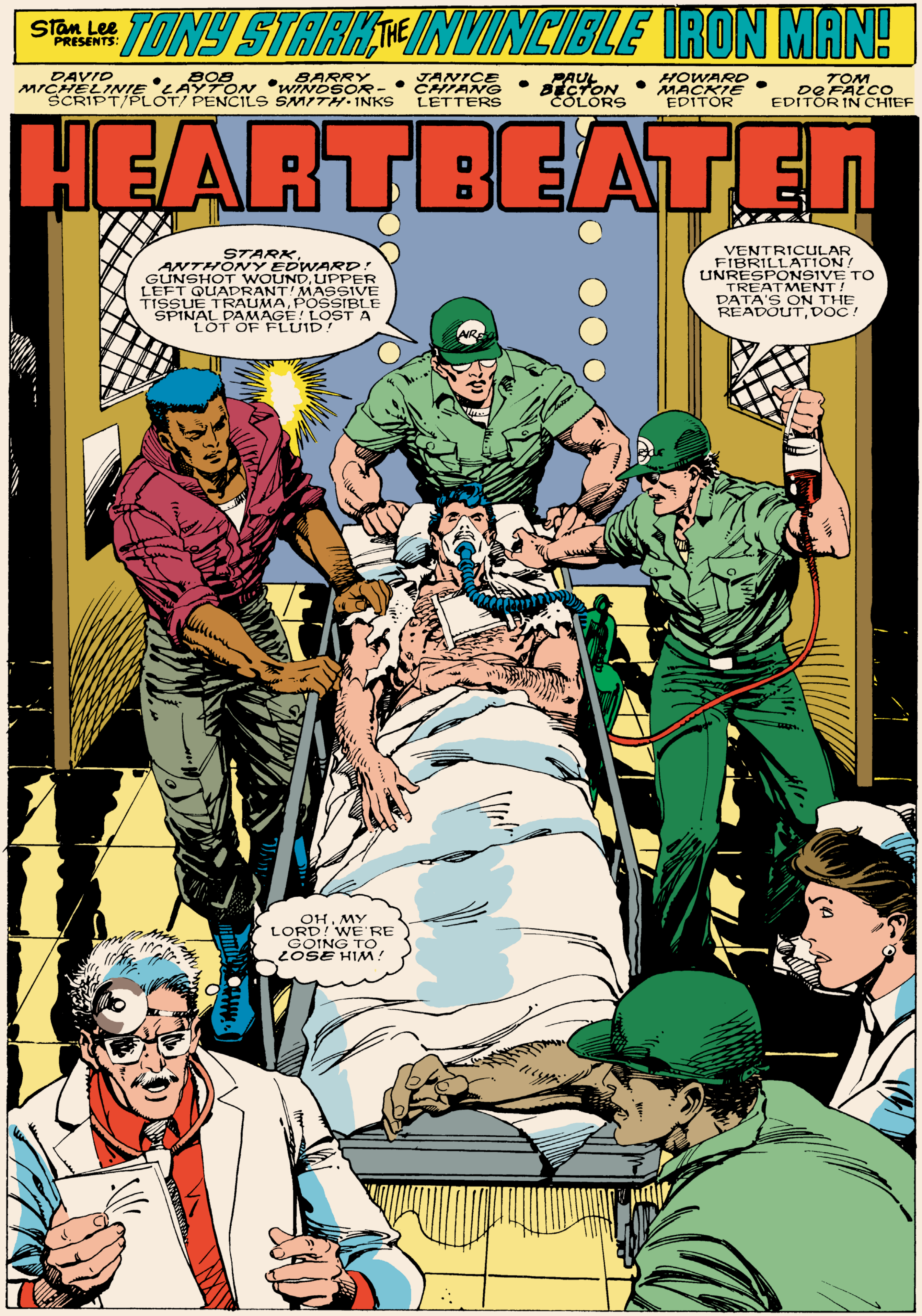

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.
I PRAY THE LORD MY SOUL TO KEEP.
SKEEERAAAAZZ

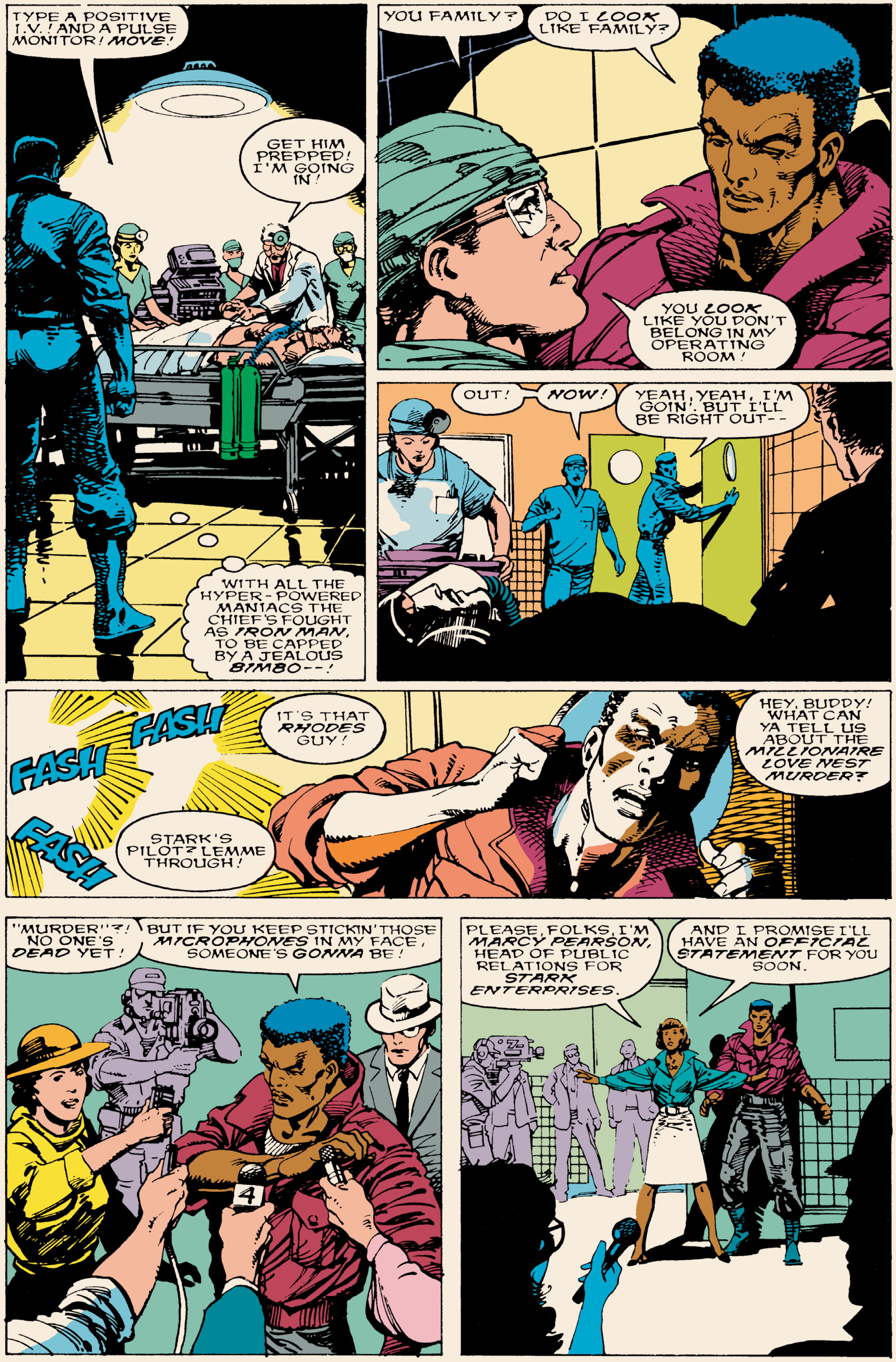

IF I SHOULD...
...DIE...
...BEFORE I WAKE.
I PRAY THE LORD--
ZEOVAATZZZ

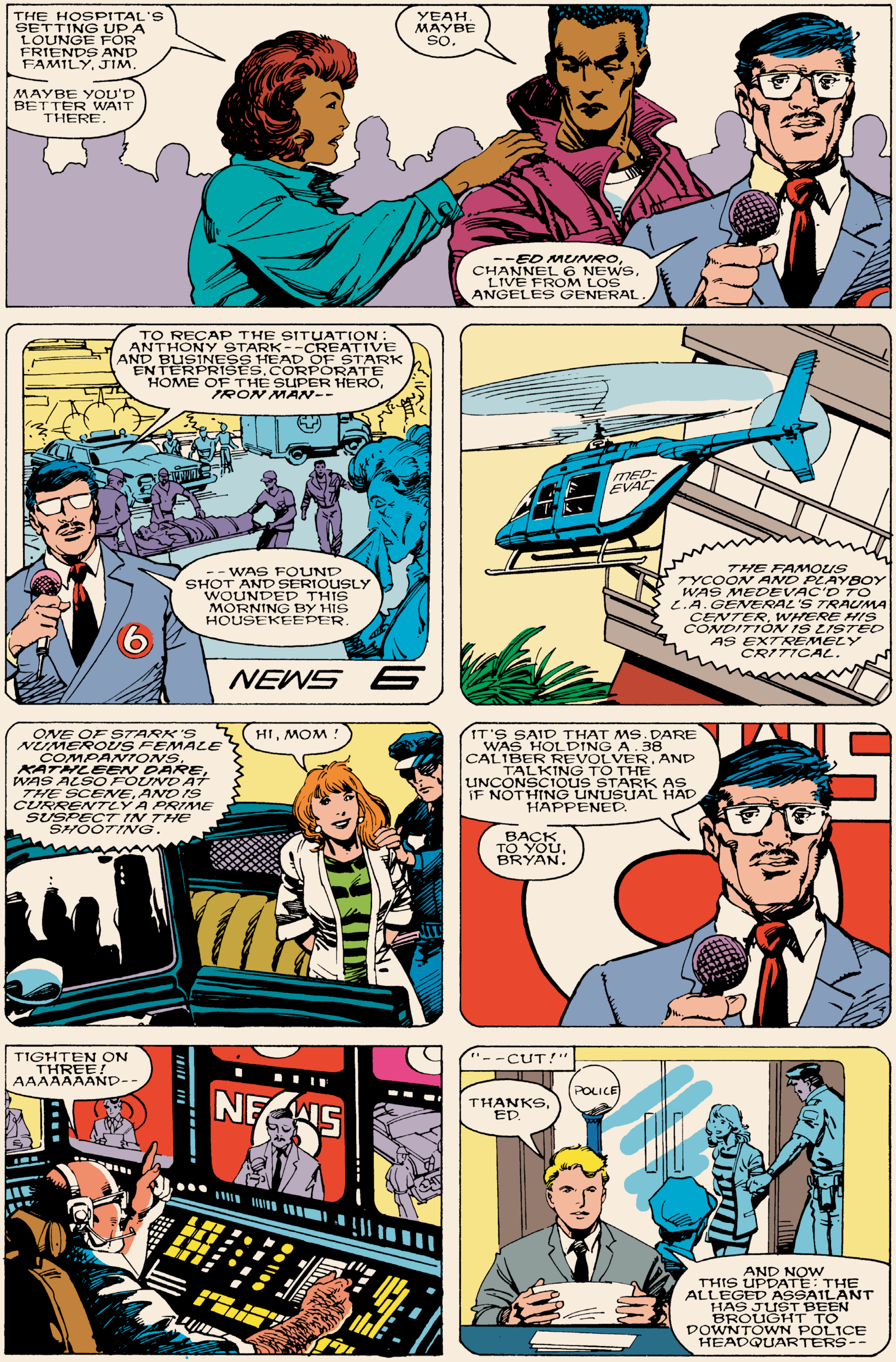

--MY SOUL--
ZZZZZ
ZAA
--TO--
AZZZZT

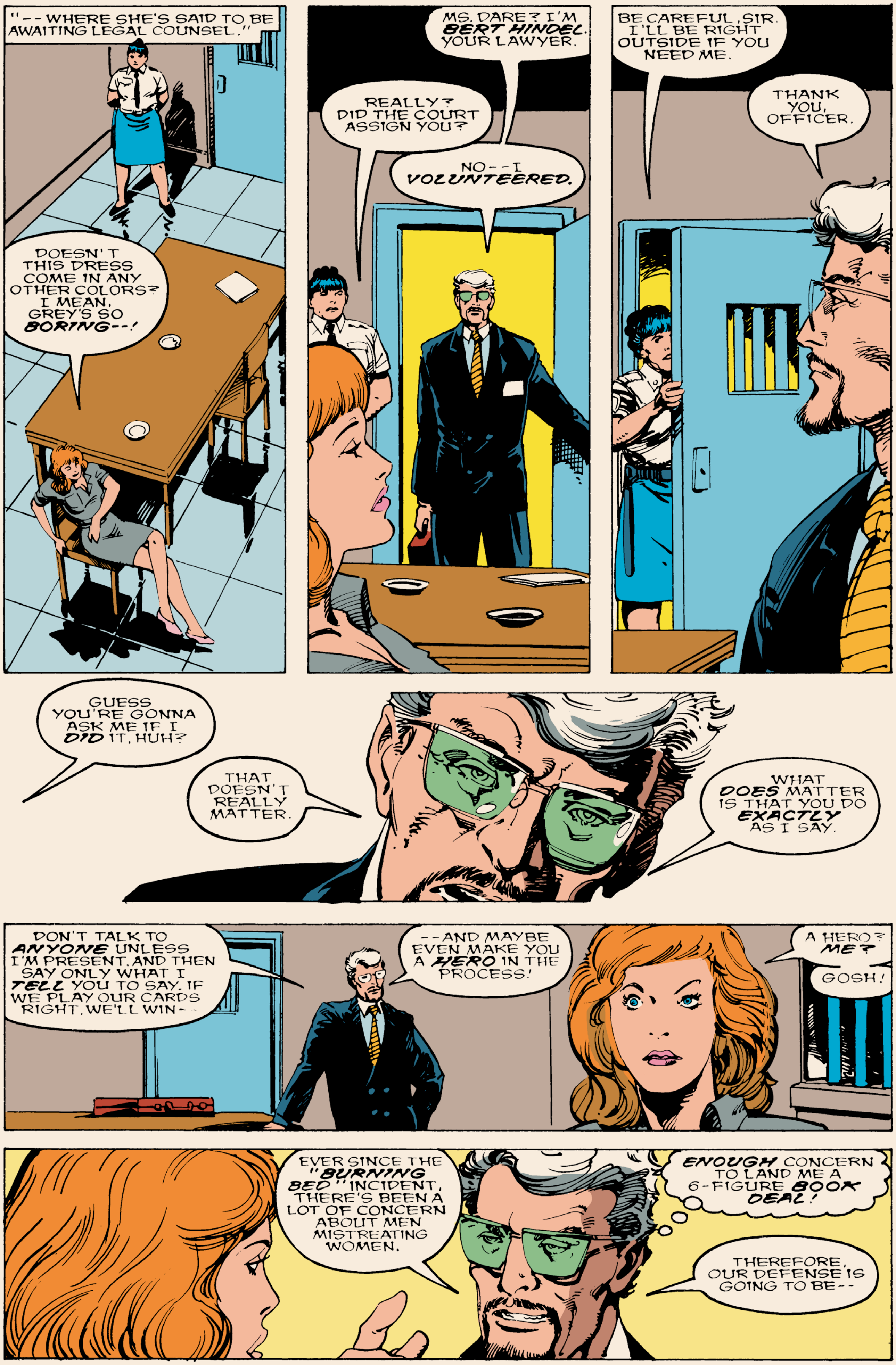

--TAKE!
GGHYYAAAAA--
--AAAAAAA--
--AAAA...
...GGK!
DREAM?
NO.
NOT A DREAM.

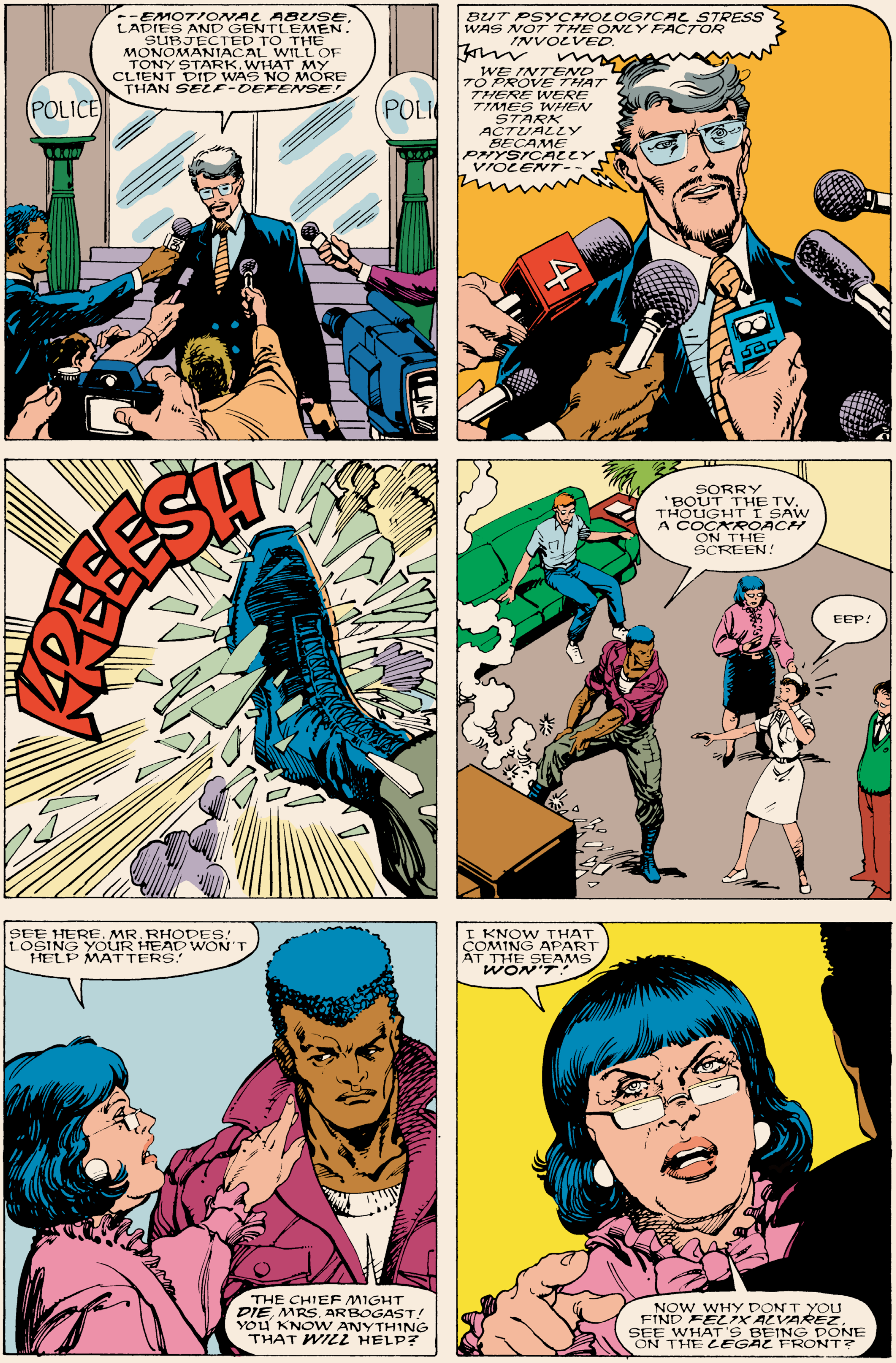

THE WORST BLOODY *NIGHTMARE* I'VE HAD IN MY LIFE!
THOUGHT THE ARMOR WARS WERE OVER, NOW THAT I'VE GOT MY STOLEN TECHNOLOGY BACK.
BUT I STILL FELT RESTLESS, UNEASY, LIKE-- *AH*, WHO'M I KIDDING?
I FELT *GUILTY*.
ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED BECAUSE OF THOSE STOLEN INVENTIONS.
BATTERED, MAIMED --BECAUSE OF WEAPONS *I* CREATED.
THOUGHT I WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO *FIGHT* THE GUILT, TO DENY IT. BUT IT KEPT GNAWING AT ME, LIKE... WELL... SOME INSATIABLE *BEAST*.
GUESS MY SUBCONSCIOUS WAS SMARTER THAN *I* WAS.
IT KNOWS I CAN *NEVER* DESTROY THE BEAST.
ALL I CAN DO IS *ACCEPT* IT
ADMIT IT AS A *PART* OF ME.
RECONCILE...
...AND THEN GET ON, AS BEST I CAN, WITH THE REST OF MY LIFE.

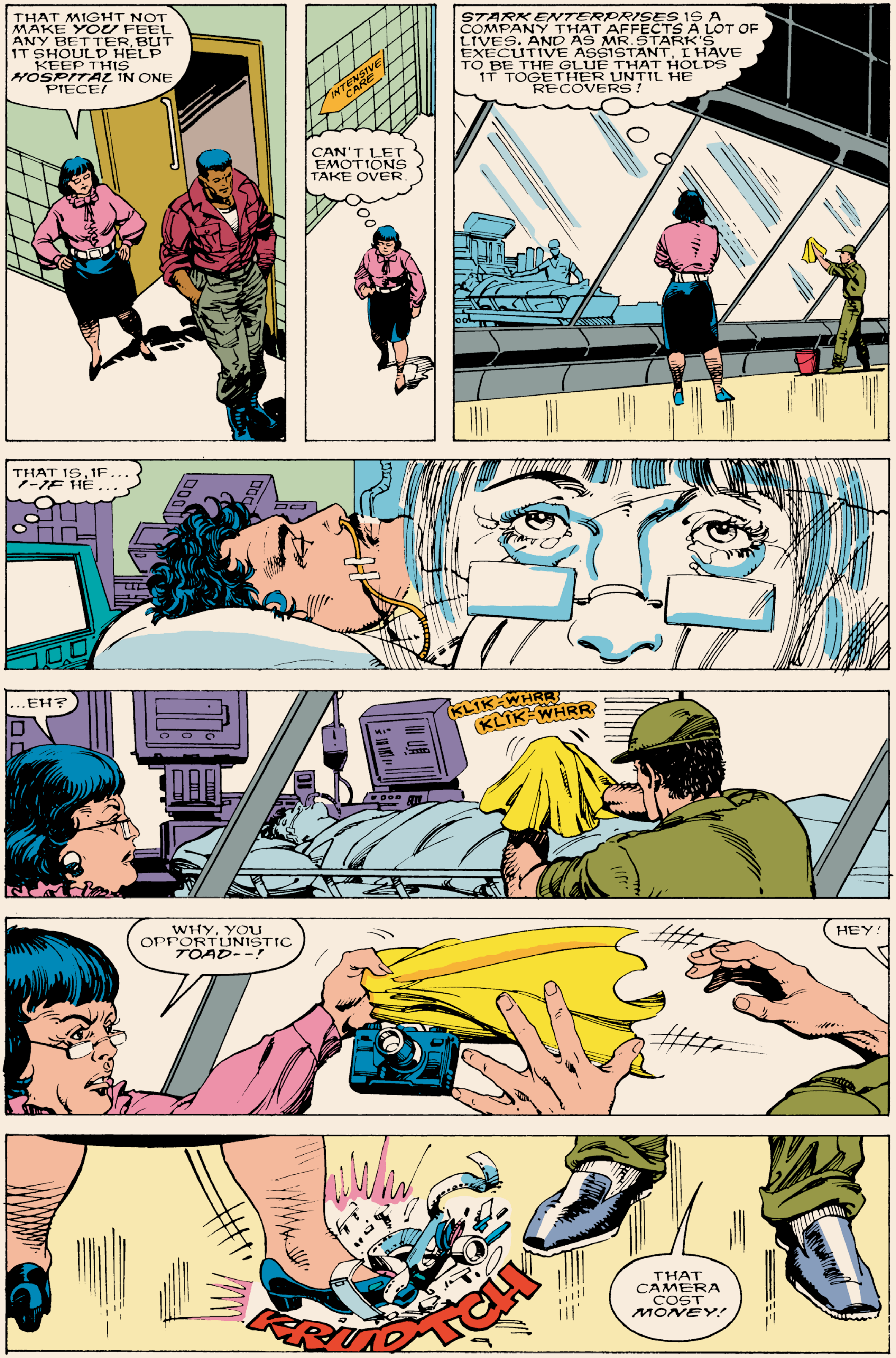

Stan Lee PRESENTS: TONY STARK, THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!
DAVID MICHELINIE • BOB LAYTON • BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH • JANICE CHIANG • PAUL BECTON • HOWARD MACKIE • TOM DeFALCO
SCRIPT/PLOT/ PENCILS • INKS • LETTERS • COLORS • EDITOR • EDITOR IN CHIEF
HEARTBEATEN
STARK, ANTHONY EDWARD! GUNSHOT WOUND, UPPER LEFT QUADRANT! MASSIVE TISSUE TRAUMA, POSSIBLE SPINAL DAMAGE! LOST A LOT OF FLUID!
VENTRICULAR FIBRILLATION! UNRESPONSIVE TO TREATMENT! DATA'S ON THE READOUT, DOC!
AIR
OH, MY LORD! WE'RE GOING TO LOSE HIM!

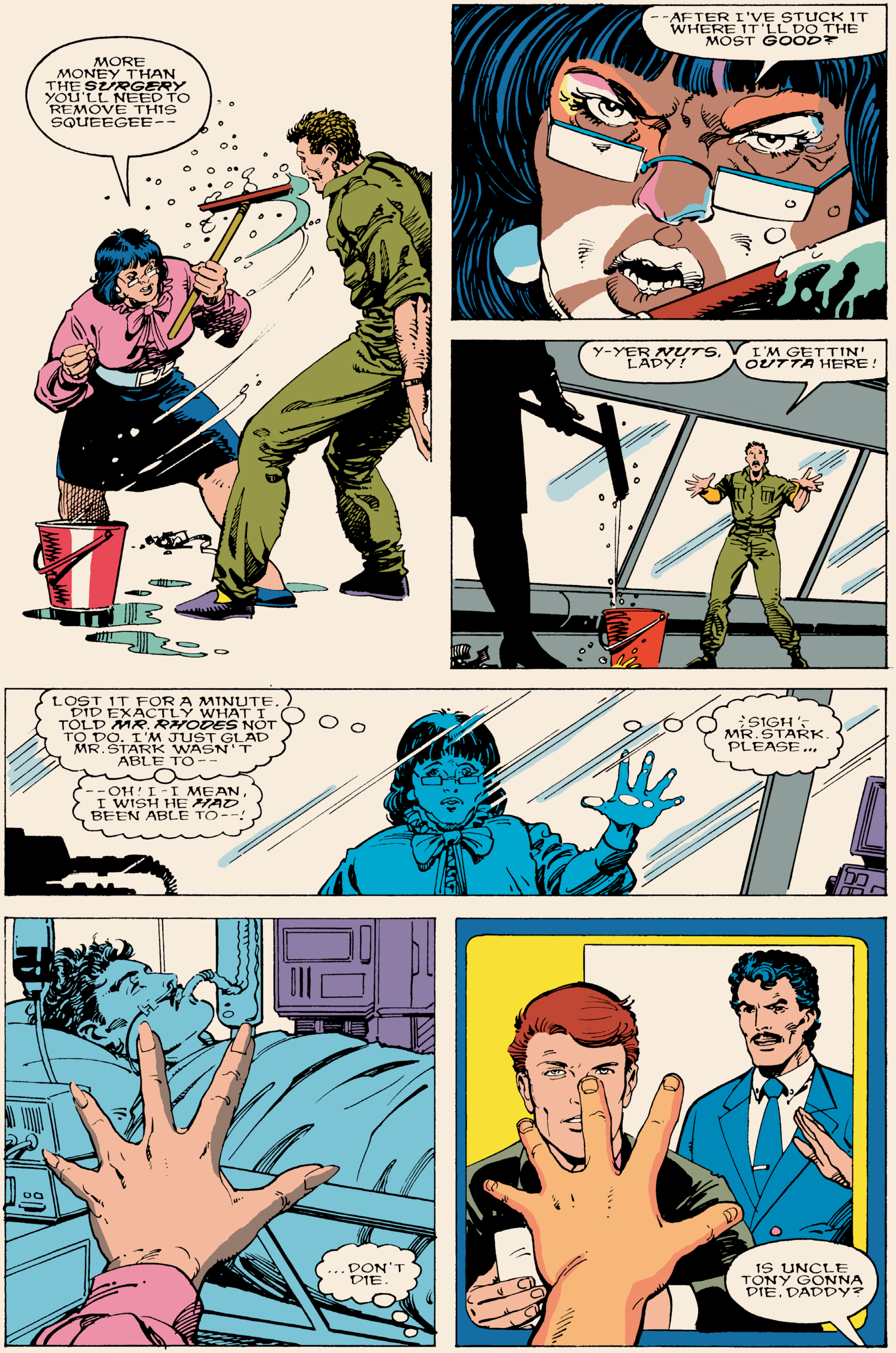

TYPE A POSITIVE I.V.! AND A PULSE MONITOR! *MOVE!*
GET HIM PREPPED! I'M GOING IN!
WITH ALL THE HYPER-POWERED MANIACS THE CHIEF'S FOUGHT AS *IRON MAN,* TO BE CAPPED BY A JEALOUS *BIMBO--!*
YOU FAMILY?
DO I *LOOK* LIKE FAMILY?
YOU *LOOK* LIKE YOU DON'T BELONG IN MY OPERATING ROOM!
OUT! *NOW!*
YEAH, YEAH, I'M GOIN'. BUT I'LL BE RIGHT OUT--
FASH FASH FASH
IT'S THAT *RHODES* GUY!
STARK'S PILOT? LEMME THROUGH!
HEY, BUDDY! WHAT CAN YA TELL US ABOUT THE *MILLIONAIRE LOVE NEST MURDER?*
"MURDER"?! NO ONE'S *DEAD* YET!
BUT IF YOU KEEP STICKIN' THOSE *MICROPHONES* IN MY FACE, SOMEONE'S *GONNA* BE!
4
PLEASE, FOLKS, I'M *MARCY PEARSON,* HEAD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR *STARK ENTERPRISES.*
AND I PROMISE I'LL HAVE AN *OFFICIAL STATEMENT* FOR YOU SOON.

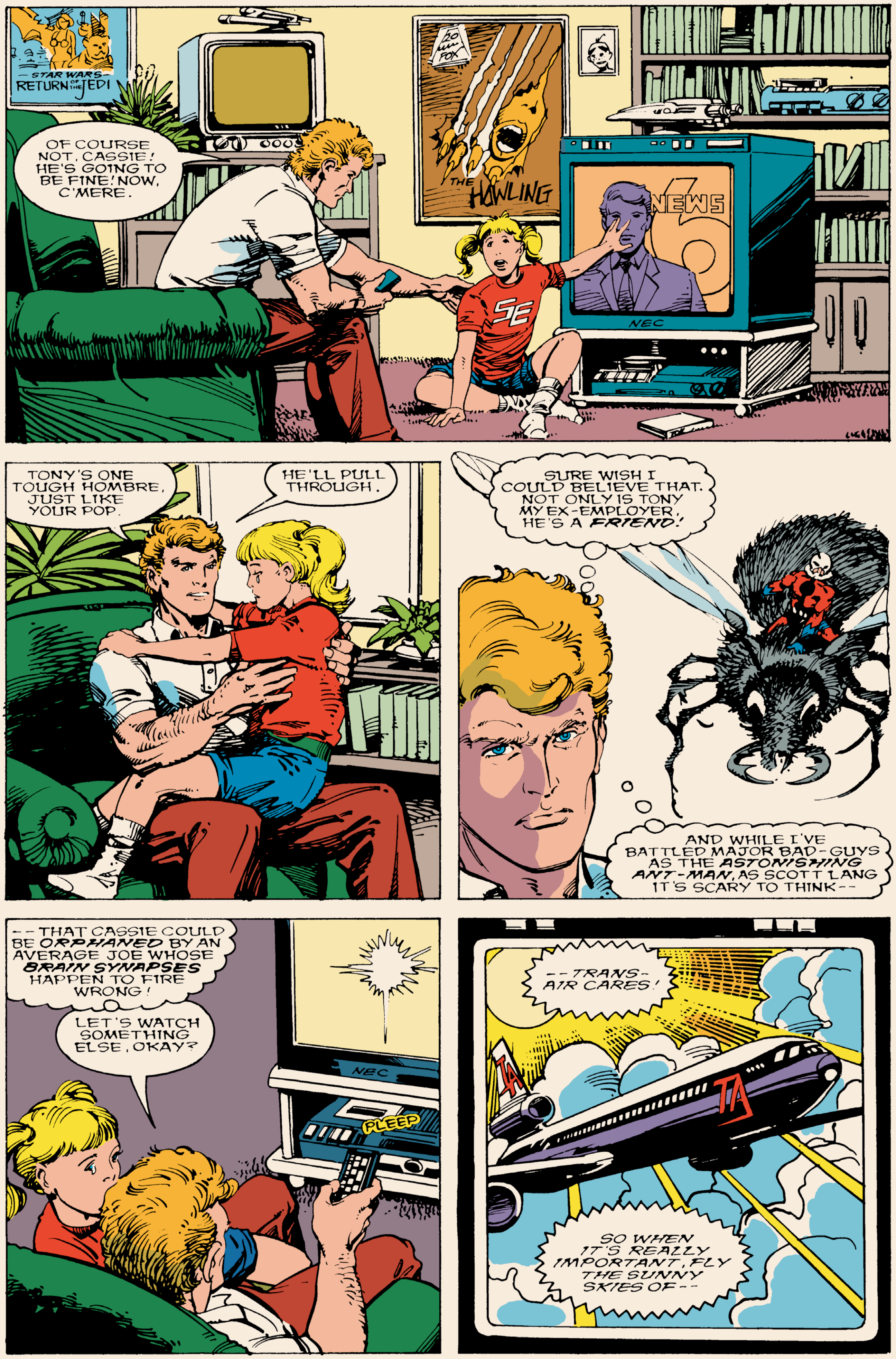

THE HOSPITAL'S SETTING UP A LOUNGE FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, JIM.
MAYBE YOU'D BETTER WAIT THERE.
YEAH. MAYBE SO.
--ED MUNRO, CHANNEL 6 NEWS, LIVE FROM LOS ANGELES GENERAL.
TO RECAP THE SITUATION: ANTHONY STARK--CREATIVE AND BUSINESS HEAD OF STARK ENTERPRISES, CORPORATE HOME OF THE SUPER HERO, IRON MAN--
--WAS FOUND SHOT AND SERIOUSLY WOUNDED THIS MORNING BY HIS HOUSEKEEPER.
NEWS 6
MED-EVAC
THE FAMOUS TYCOON AND PLAYBOY WAS MEDEVAC'D TO L.A. GENERAL'S TRAUMA CENTER, WHERE HIS CONDITION IS LISTED AS EXTREMELY CRITICAL.
ONE OF STARK'S NUMEROUS FEMALE COMPANIONS, KATHLEEN DARE, WAS ALSO FOUND AT THE SCENE, AND IS CURRENTLY A PRIME SUSPECT IN THE SHOOTING.
HI, MOM!
IT'S SAID THAT MS. DARE WAS HOLDING A .38 CALIBER REVOLVER, AND TALKING TO THE UNCONSCIOUS STARK AS IF NOTHING UNUSUAL HAD HAPPENED.
BACK TO YOU, BRYAN.
TIGHTEN ON THREE! AAAAAAAND--
NEWS
"--CUT!"
THANKS, ED.
POLICE
AND NOW THIS UPDATE: THE ALLEGED ASSAILANT HAS JUST BEEN BROUGHT TO DOWNTOWN POLICE HEADQUARTERS--

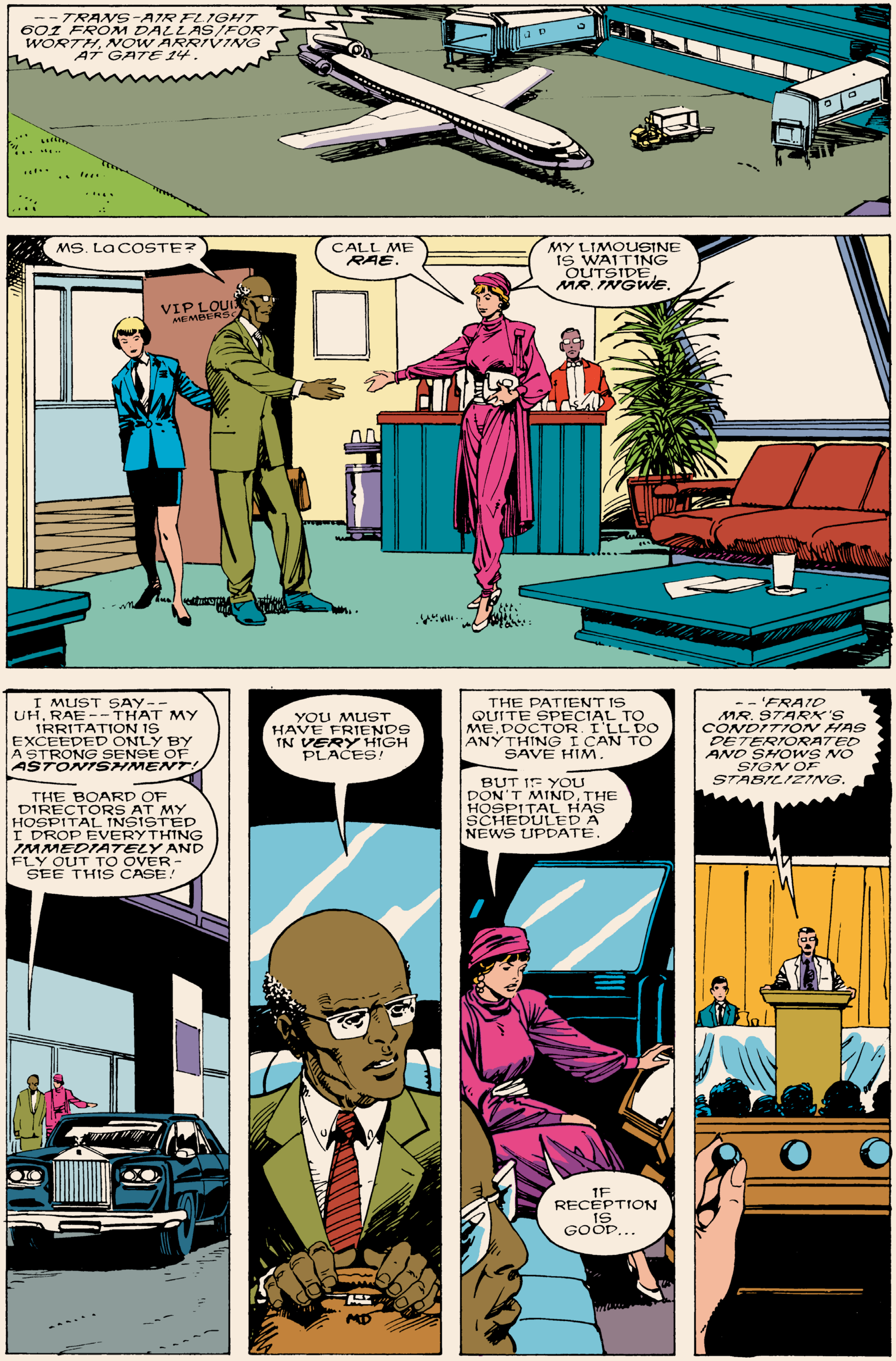

"-- WHERE SHE'S SAID TO BE AWAITING LEGAL COUNSEL."
DOESN'T THIS DRESS COME IN ANY OTHER COLORS? I MEAN, GREY'S SO *BORING*--!
MS. DARE? I'M *BERT HINDEL*. YOUR LAWYER.
REALLY? DID THE COURT ASSIGN YOU?
NO--I *VOLUNTEERED*.
BE CAREFUL, SIR. I'LL BE RIGHT OUTSIDE IF YOU NEED ME.
THANK YOU, OFFICER.
GUESS YOU'RE GONNA ASK ME IF I *DID* IT, HUH?
THAT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.
WHAT *DOES* MATTER IS THAT YOU DO *EXACTLY* AS I SAY.
DON'T TALK TO *ANYONE* UNLESS I'M PRESENT. AND THEN SAY ONLY WHAT I *TELL* YOU TO SAY. IF WE PLAY OUR CARDS RIGHT, WE'LL WIN--
--AND MAYBE EVEN MAKE YOU A *HERO* IN THE PROCESS!
A HERO? *ME*?
GOSH!
EVER SINCE THE "*BURNING BED*" INCIDENT, THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF CONCERN ABOUT MEN MISTREATING WOMEN.
ENOUGH CONCERN TO LAND ME A 6-FIGURE *BOOK DEAL*!
THEREFORE, OUR DEFENSE IS GOING TO BE--

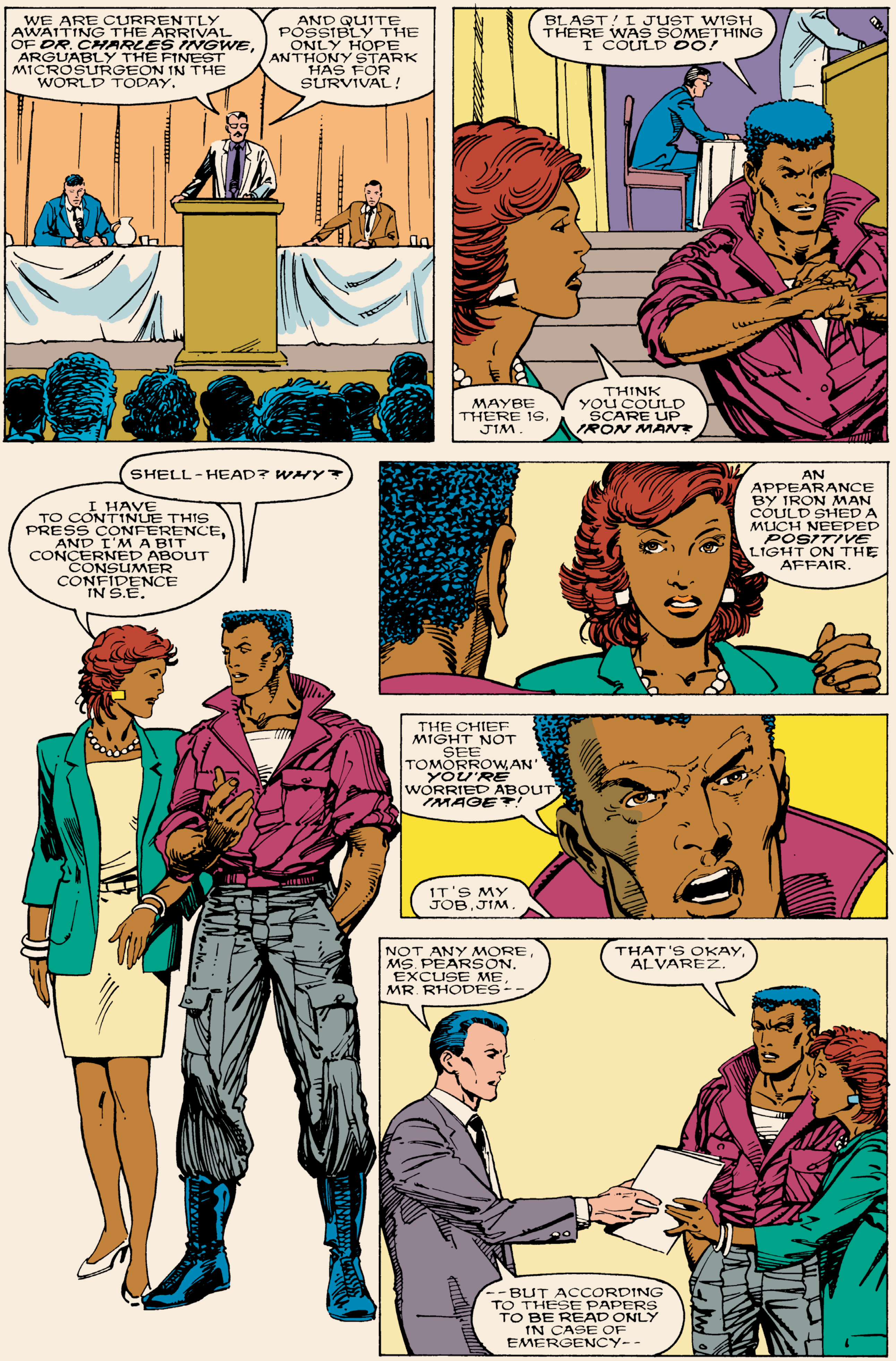

--EMOTIONAL ABUSE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. SUBJECTED TO THE MONOMANIACAL WILL OF TONY STARK, WHAT MY CLIENT DID WAS NO MORE THAN SELF-DEFENSE!
POLICE
POLI
BUT PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS WAS NOT THE ONLY FACTOR INVOLVED.
WE INTEND TO PROVE THAT THERE WERE TIMES WHEN STARK ACTUALLY BECAME PHYSICALLY VIOLENT--
4
KREEESH
SORRY 'BOUT THE TV. THOUGHT I SAW A COCKROACH ON THE SCREEN!
EEP!
SEE HERE, MR. RHODES! LOSING YOUR HEAD WON'T HELP MATTERS!
THE CHIEF MIGHT DIE, MRS. ARBOGAST! YOU KNOW ANYTHING THAT WILL HELP?
I KNOW THAT COMING APART AT THE SEAMS WON'T!
NOW WHY DON'T YOU FIND FELIX ALVAREZ, SEE WHAT'S BEING DONE ON THE LEGAL FRONT?

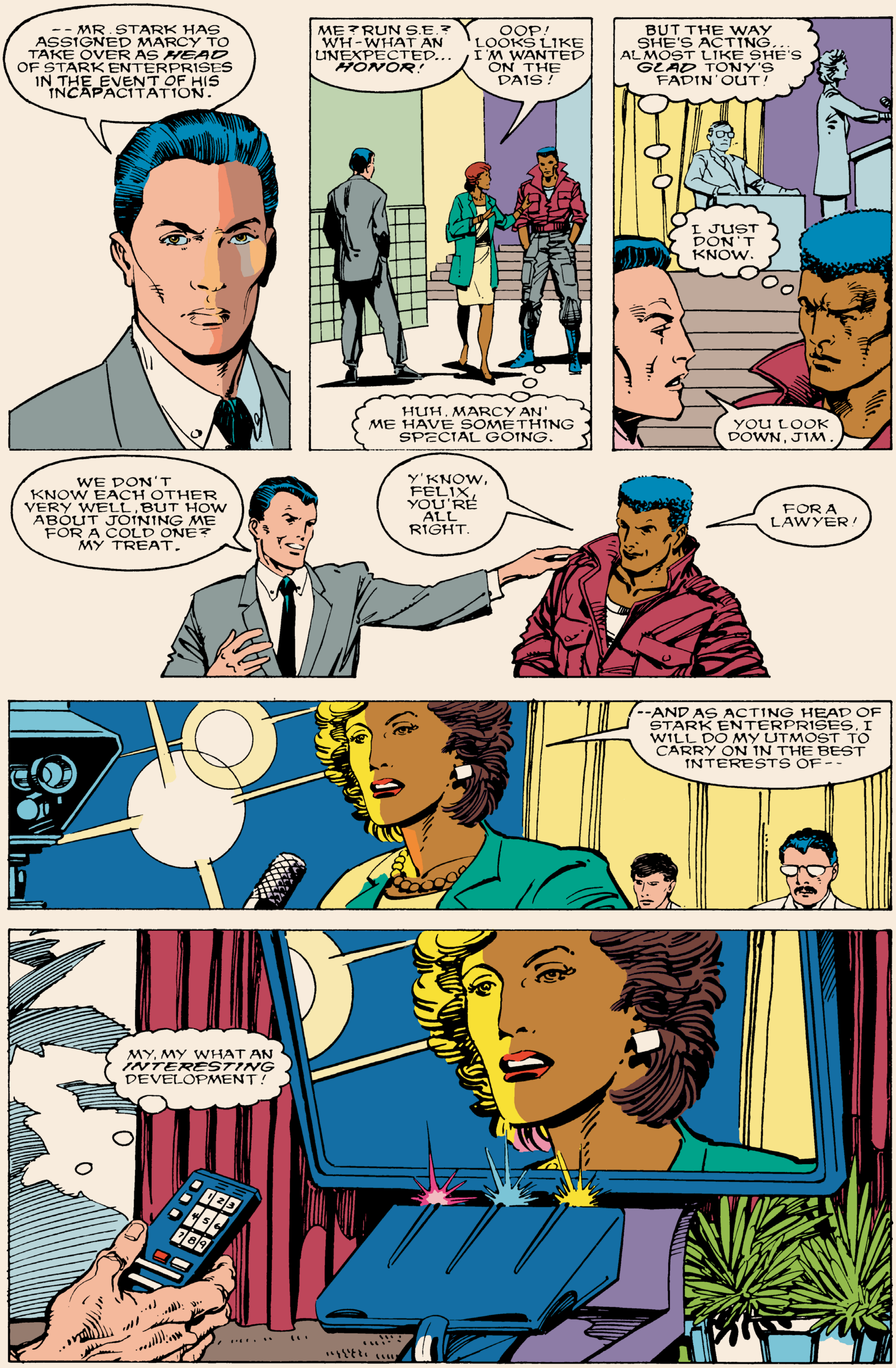

THAT MIGHT NOT MAKE *YOU* FEEL ANY BETTER, BUT IT SHOULD HELP KEEP THIS *HOSPITAL* IN ONE PIECE!
INTENSIVE CARE
CAN'T LET EMOTIONS TAKE OVER.
STARK ENTERPRISES IS A COMPANY THAT AFFECTS A LOT OF LIVES. AND AS MR. STARK'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, I HAVE TO BE THE GLUE THAT HOLDS IT TOGETHER UNTIL HE RECOVERS!
THAT IS, IF... *I-IF* HE...
...EH?
KLIK-WHRR
KLIK-WHRR
WHY, YOU OPPORTUNISTIC *TOAD--!*
HEY!
KRUDTCH
THAT CAMERA COST *MONEY!*

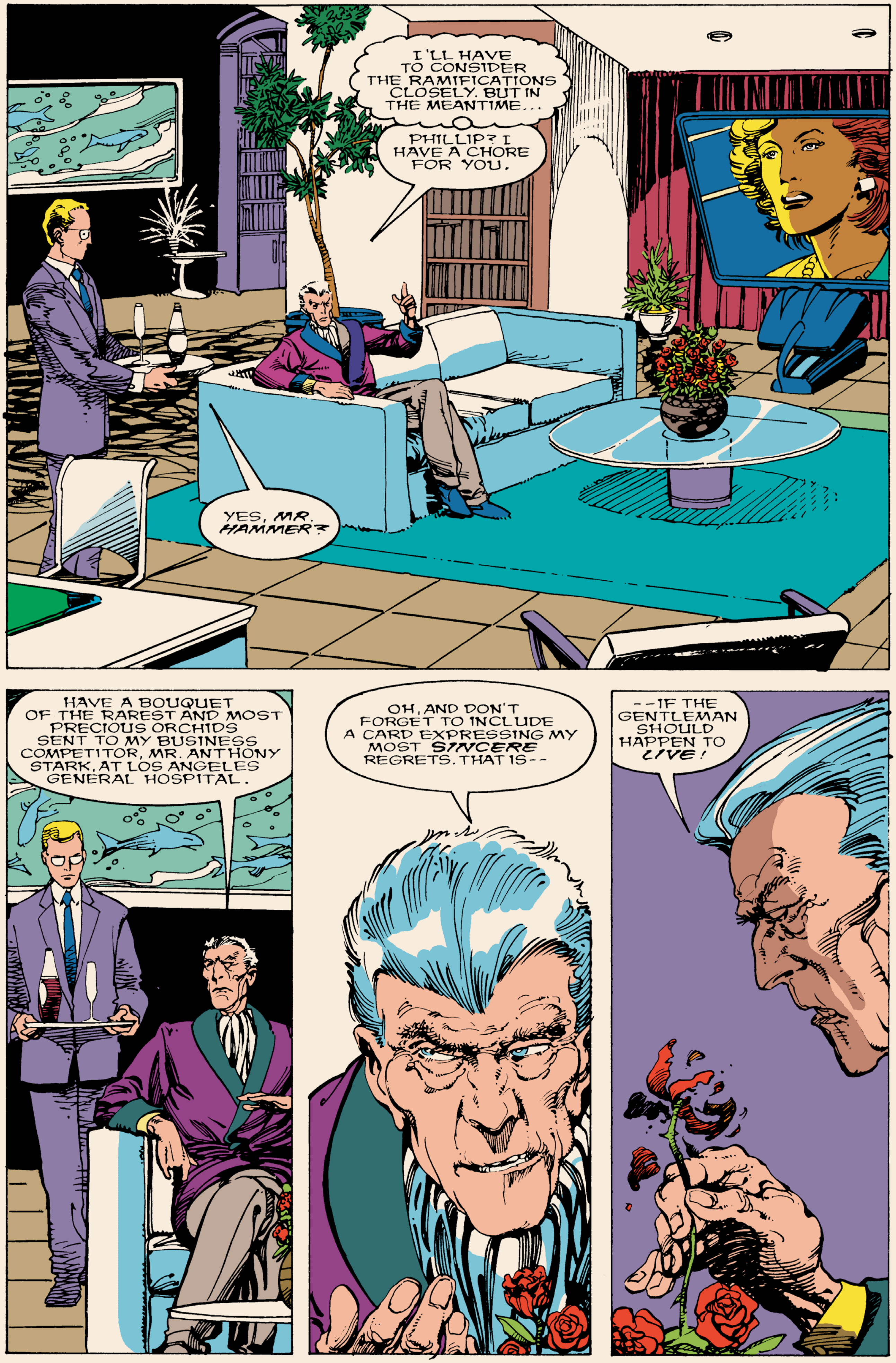

MORE MONEY THAN THE *SURGERY* YOU'LL NEED TO REMOVE THIS SQUEEGEE--
--AFTER I'VE STUCK IT WHERE IT'LL DO THE MOST *GOOD*?
Y-YER *NUTS*, LADY!
I'M GETTIN' *OUTTA* HERE!
LOST IT FOR A MINUTE. DID EXACTLY WHAT I TOLD *MR. RHODES* NOT TO DO. I'M JUST GLAD MR. STARK WASN'T ABLE TO--
--OH! I-I MEAN, I WISH HE *HAD* BEEN ABLE TO--!
-SIGH- MR. STARK. PLEASE...
...DON'T DIE.
IS UNCLE TONY GONNA DIE, DADDY?

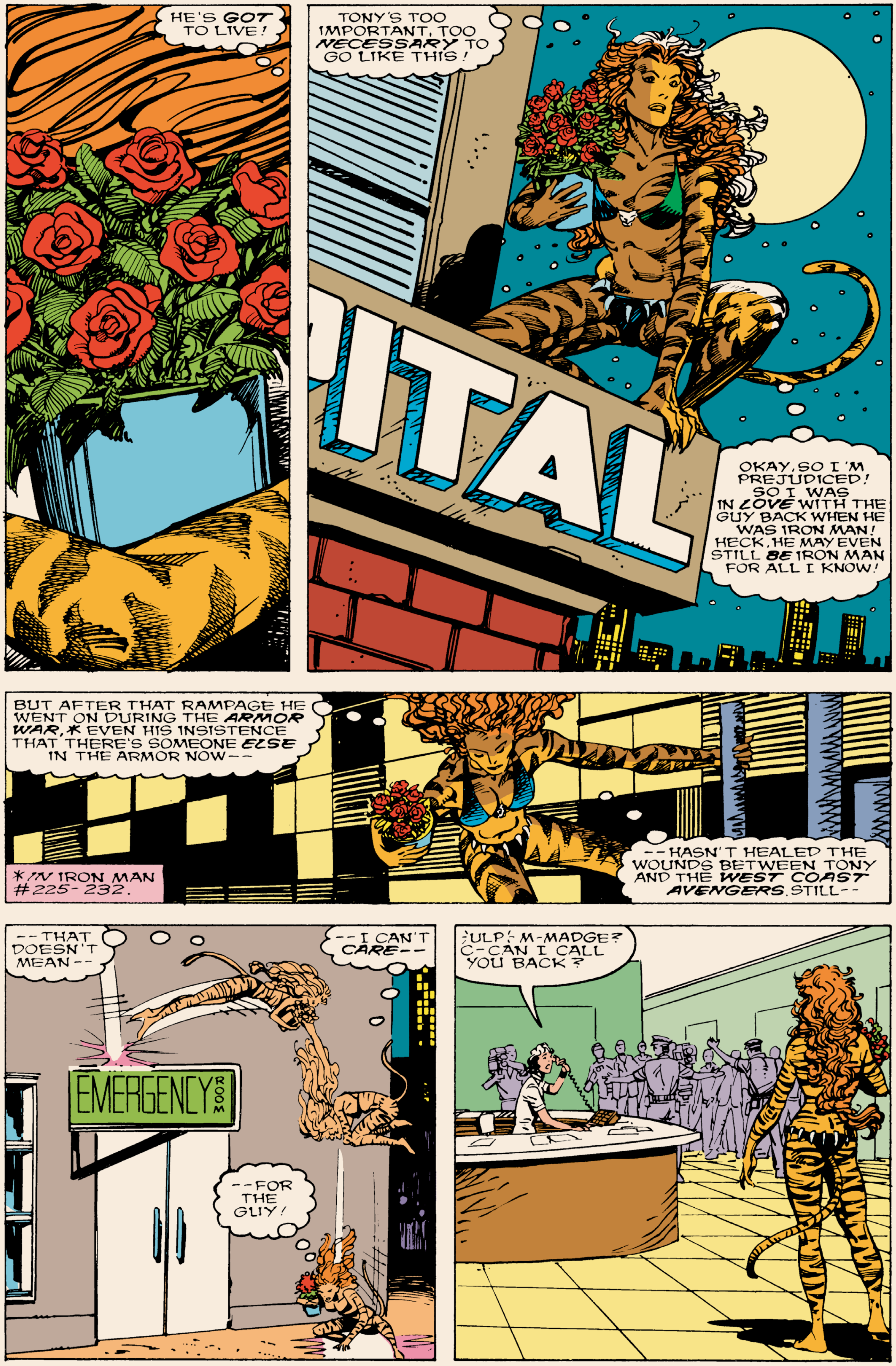

STAR WARS
RETURN OF THE JEDI
20th FOX
THE HOWLING
NEWS 6
SE
NEC
OF COURSE NOT, CASSIE! HE'S GOING TO BE FINE! NOW, C'MERE.
TONY'S ONE TOUGH HOMBRE, JUST LIKE YOUR POP.
HE'LL PULL THROUGH.
SURE WISH I COULD BELIEVE THAT. NOT ONLY IS TONY MY EX-EMPLOYER, HE'S A *FRIEND!*
AND WHILE I'VE BATTLED MAJOR BAD-GUYS AS THE *ASTONISHING ANT-MAN*, AS SCOTT LANG IT'S SCARY TO THINK--
--THAT CASSIE COULD BE *ORPHANED* BY AN AVERAGE JOE WHOSE *BRAIN SYNAPSES* HAPPEN TO FIRE WRONG!
LET'S WATCH SOMETHING ELSE, OKAY?
NEC
PLEEP
--TRANS-AIR CARES!
TA
SO WHEN IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT, FLY THE SUNNY SKIES OF--

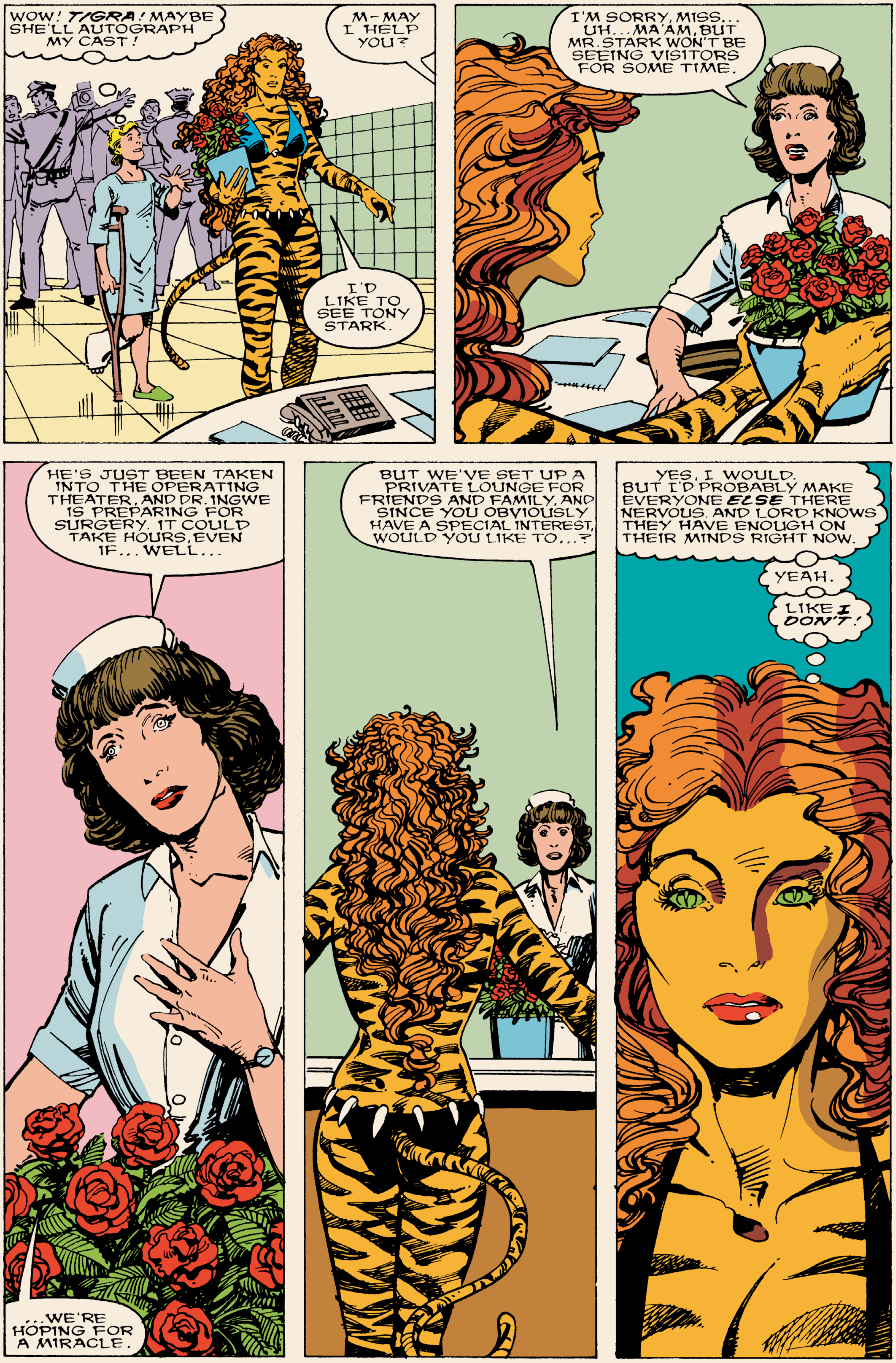

--TRANS-AIR FLIGHT 601 FROM DALLAS/FORT WORTH, NOW ARRIVING AT GATE 14.
MS. LaCOSTE?
CALL ME *RAE.*
MY LIMOUSINE IS WAITING OUTSIDE, *MR. INGWE.*
VIP LOU
MEMBERS
I MUST SAY-- UH, RAE--THAT MY IRRITATION IS EXCEEDED ONLY BY A STRONG SENSE OF *ASTONISHMENT!*
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT MY HOSPITAL INSISTED I DROP EVERYTHING *IMMEDIATELY* AND FLY OUT TO OVERSEE THIS CASE!
YOU MUST HAVE FRIENDS IN *VERY* HIGH PLACES!
THE PATIENT IS QUITE SPECIAL TO ME, DOCTOR. I'LL DO ANYTHING I CAN TO SAVE HIM.
BUT IF YOU DON'T MIND, THE HOSPITAL HAS SCHEDULED A NEWS UPDATE.
IF RECEPTION IS GOOD...
--'FRAID MR. STARK'S CONDITION HAS DETERIORATED AND SHOWS NO SIGN OF STABILIZING.

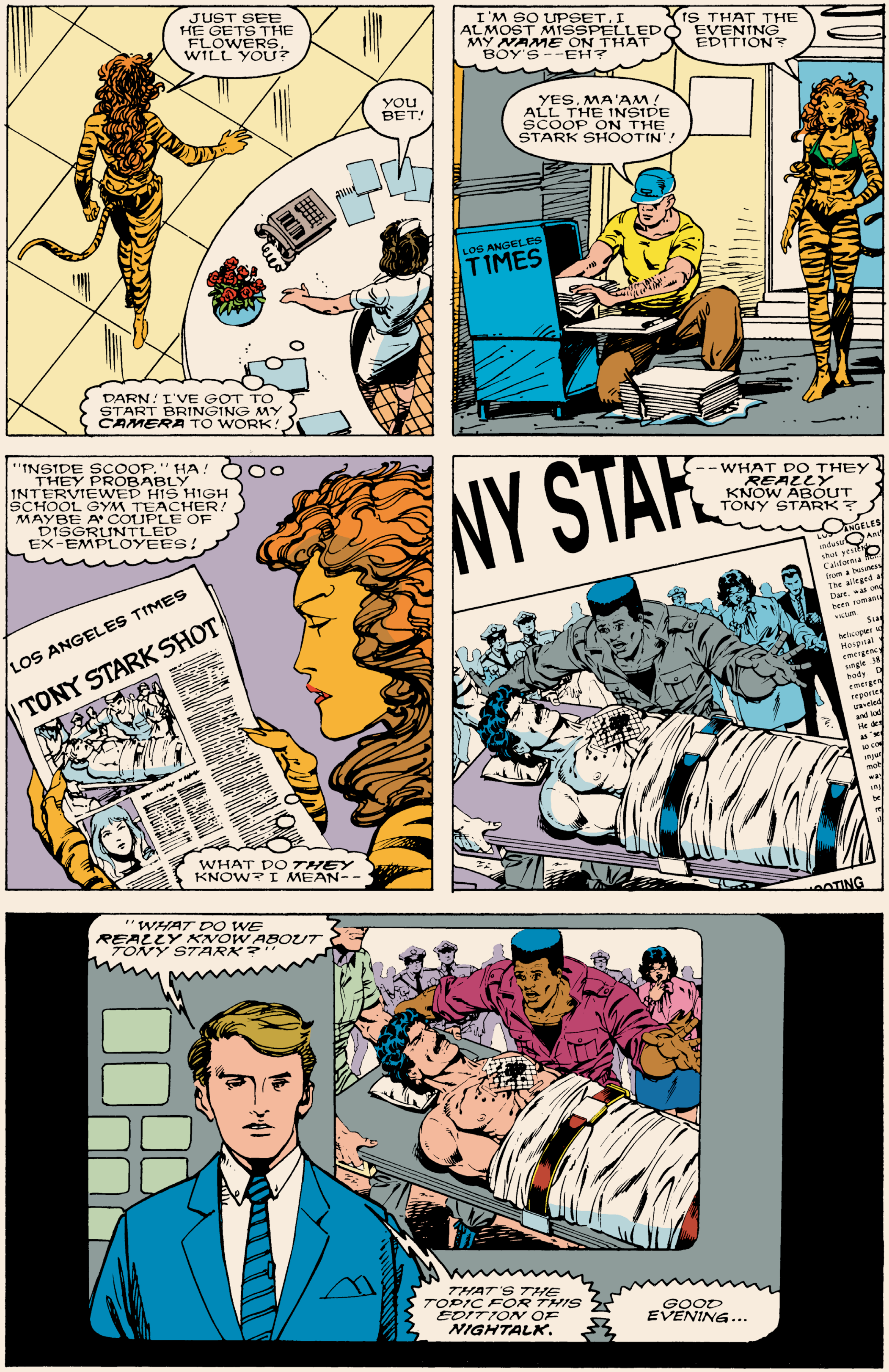

WE ARE CURRENTLY AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF *DR. CHARLES INGWE,* ARGUABLY THE FINEST MICROSURGEON IN THE WORLD TODAY.
AND QUITE POSSIBLY THE ONLY HOPE ANTHONY STARK HAS FOR SURVIVAL!
BLAST! I JUST WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD *DO!*
MAYBE THERE IS, JIM.
THINK YOU COULD SCARE UP *IRON MAN?*
SHELL-HEAD? *WHY?*
I HAVE TO CONTINUE THIS PRESS CONFERENCE, AND I'M A BIT CONCERNED ABOUT CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN S.E.
AN APPEARANCE BY IRON MAN COULD SHED A MUCH NEEDED *POSITIVE* LIGHT ON THE AFFAIR.
THE CHIEF MIGHT NOT SEE TOMORROW, AN' *YOU'RE* WORRIED ABOUT *IMAGE?!*
IT'S MY JOB, JIM.
NOT ANY MORE, MS. PEARSON. EXCUSE ME, MR. RHODES--
THAT'S OKAY, ALVAREZ.
--BUT ACCORDING TO THESE PAPERS TO BE READ ONLY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY--

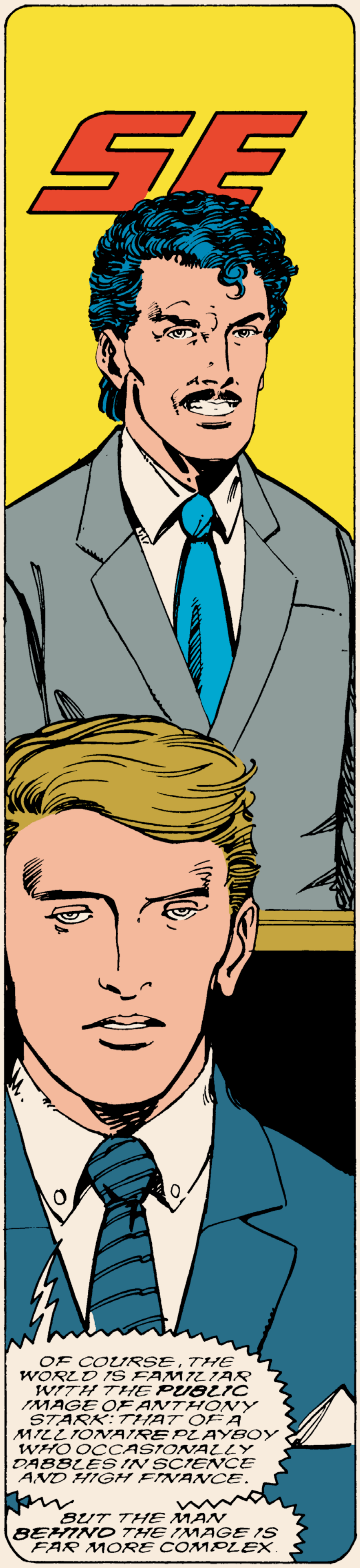

--MR. STARK HAS ASSIGNED MARCY TO TAKE OVER AS *HEAD* OF STARK ENTERPRISES IN THE EVENT OF HIS INCAPACITATION.
ME? RUN S.E.? WH-WHAT AN UNEXPECTED... *HONOR!*
OOP! LOOKS LIKE I'M WANTED ON THE DAIS!
HUH. MARCY AN' ME HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL GOING.
BUT THE WAY SHE'S ACTING... ALMOST LIKE SHE'S *GLAD* TONY'S FADIN' OUT!
I JUST DON'T KNOW.
YOU LOOK DOWN, JIM.
WE DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER VERY WELL, BUT HOW ABOUT JOINING ME FOR A COLD ONE? MY TREAT.
Y'KNOW, FELIX, YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.
FOR A LAWYER!
--AND AS ACTING HEAD OF STARK ENTERPRISES, I WILL DO MY UTMOST TO CARRY ON IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF--
MY, MY WHAT AN *INTERESTING* DEVELOPMENT!

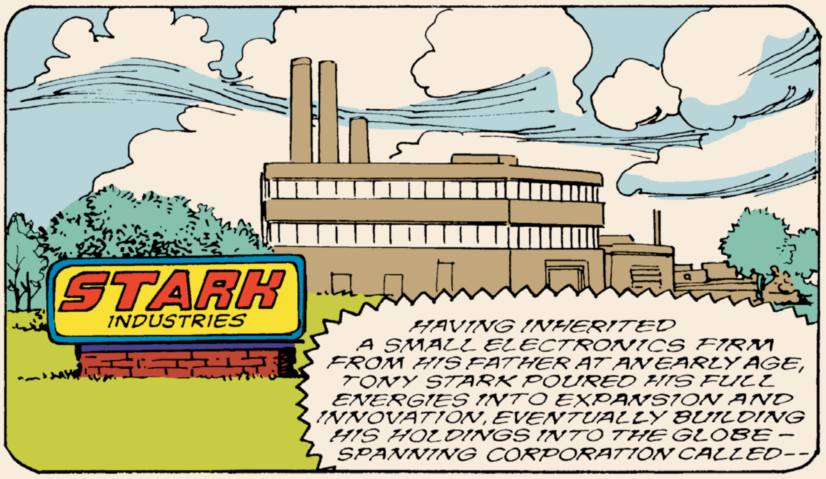

I'LL HAVE TO CONSIDER THE RAMIFICATIONS CLOSELY. BUT IN THE MEANTIME...
PHILLIP? I HAVE A CHORE FOR YOU.
YES, *MR. HAMMER?*
HAVE A BOUQUET OF THE RAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS ORCHIDS SENT TO MY BUSINESS COMPETITOR, MR. ANTHONY STARK, AT LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL.
OH, AND DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE A CARD EXPRESSING MY MOST *SINCERE* REGRETS. THAT IS--
--IF THE GENTLEMAN SHOULD HAPPEN TO *LIVE!*

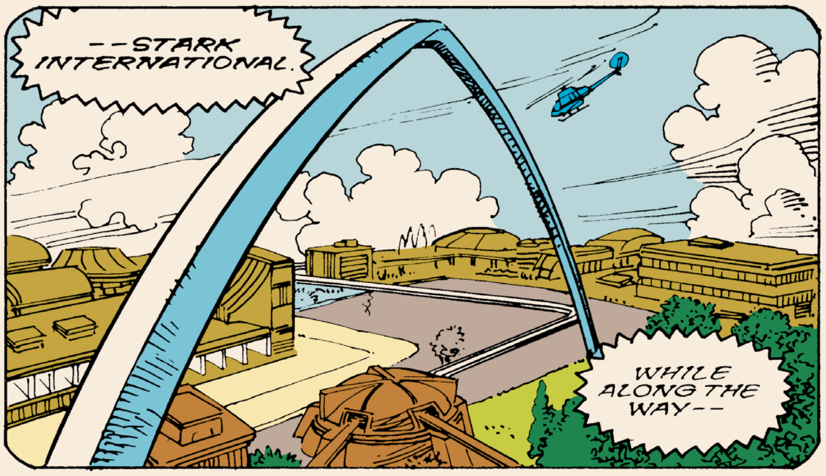

HE'S GOT TO LIVE!
TONY'S TOO IMPORTANT, TOO NECESSARY TO GO LIKE THIS!
ITAL
OKAY, SO I'M PREJUDICED! SO I WAS IN LOVE WITH THE GUY BACK WHEN HE WAS IRON MAN! HECK, HE MAY EVEN STILL BE IRON MAN FOR ALL I KNOW!
BUT AFTER THAT RAMPAGE HE WENT ON DURING THE ARMOR WAR,* EVEN HIS INSISTENCE THAT THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE IN THE ARMOR NOW--
*IN IRON MAN #225-232.
--HASN'T HEALED THE WOUNDS BETWEEN TONY AND THE WEST COAST AVENGERS. STILL--
--THAT DOESN'T MEAN--
--I CAN'T CARE--
EMERGENCY ROOM
--FOR THE GUY!
¡ULP!- M-MADGE? C-CAN I CALL YOU BACK?

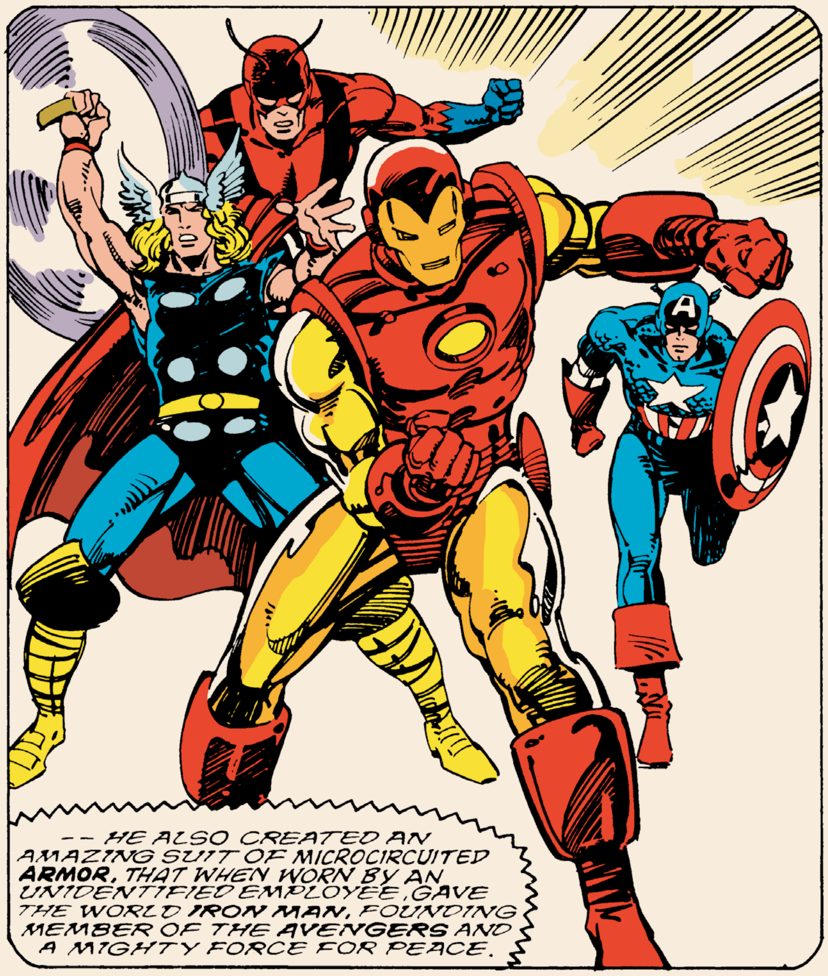

WOW! *TIGRA!* MAYBE SHE'LL AUTOGRAPH MY CAST!
M-MAY I HELP YOU?
I'D LIKE TO SEE TONY STARK.
I'M SORRY, MISS... UH... MA'AM, BUT MR. STARK WON'T BE SEEING VISITORS FOR SOME TIME.
HE'S JUST BEEN TAKEN INTO THE OPERATING THEATER, AND DR. INGWE IS PREPARING FOR SURGERY. IT COULD TAKE HOURS, EVEN IF... WELL...
...WE'RE HOPING FOR A MIRACLE.
BUT WE'VE SET UP A PRIVATE LOUNGE FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, AND SINCE YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE A SPECIAL INTEREST, WOULD YOU LIKE TO...?
YES, I WOULD. BUT I'D PROBABLY MAKE EVERYONE *ELSE* THERE NERVOUS. AND LORD KNOWS THEY HAVE ENOUGH ON THEIR MINDS RIGHT NOW.
YEAH.
LIKE *I* DON'T!

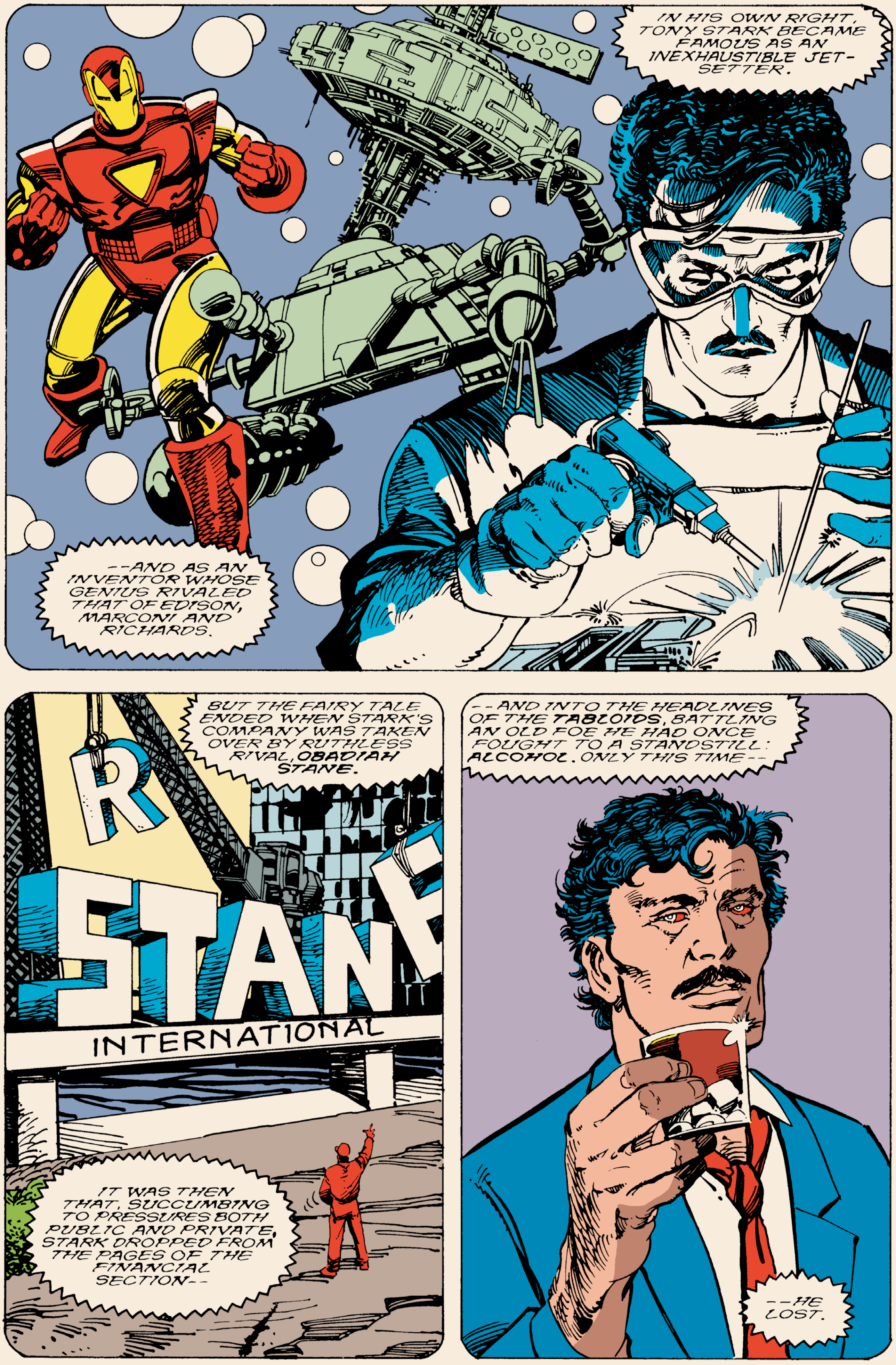

JUST SEE HE GETS THE FLOWERS, WILL YOU?
YOU BET!
DARN! I'VE GOT TO START BRINGING MY *CAMERA* TO WORK!
I'M SO UPSET, I ALMOST MISSPELLED MY *NAME* ON THAT BOY'S --EH?
IS THAT THE EVENING EDITION?
YES, MA'AM! ALL THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE STARK SHOOTIN'!
LOS ANGELES TIMES
"INSIDE SCOOP." HA! THEY PROBABLY INTERVIEWED HIS HIGH SCHOOL GYM TEACHER! MAYBE A COUPLE OF DISGRUNTLED EX-EMPLOYEES!
LOS ANGELES TIMES
TONY STARK SHOT
WHAT DO *THEY* KNOW? I MEAN--
NY STAR
--WHAT DO THEY *REALLY* KNOW ABOUT TONY STARK?
"WHAT DO WE *REALLY* KNOW ABOUT TONY STARK?"
THAT'S THE TOPIC FOR THIS EDITION OF **NIGHTALK**.
GOOD EVENING...

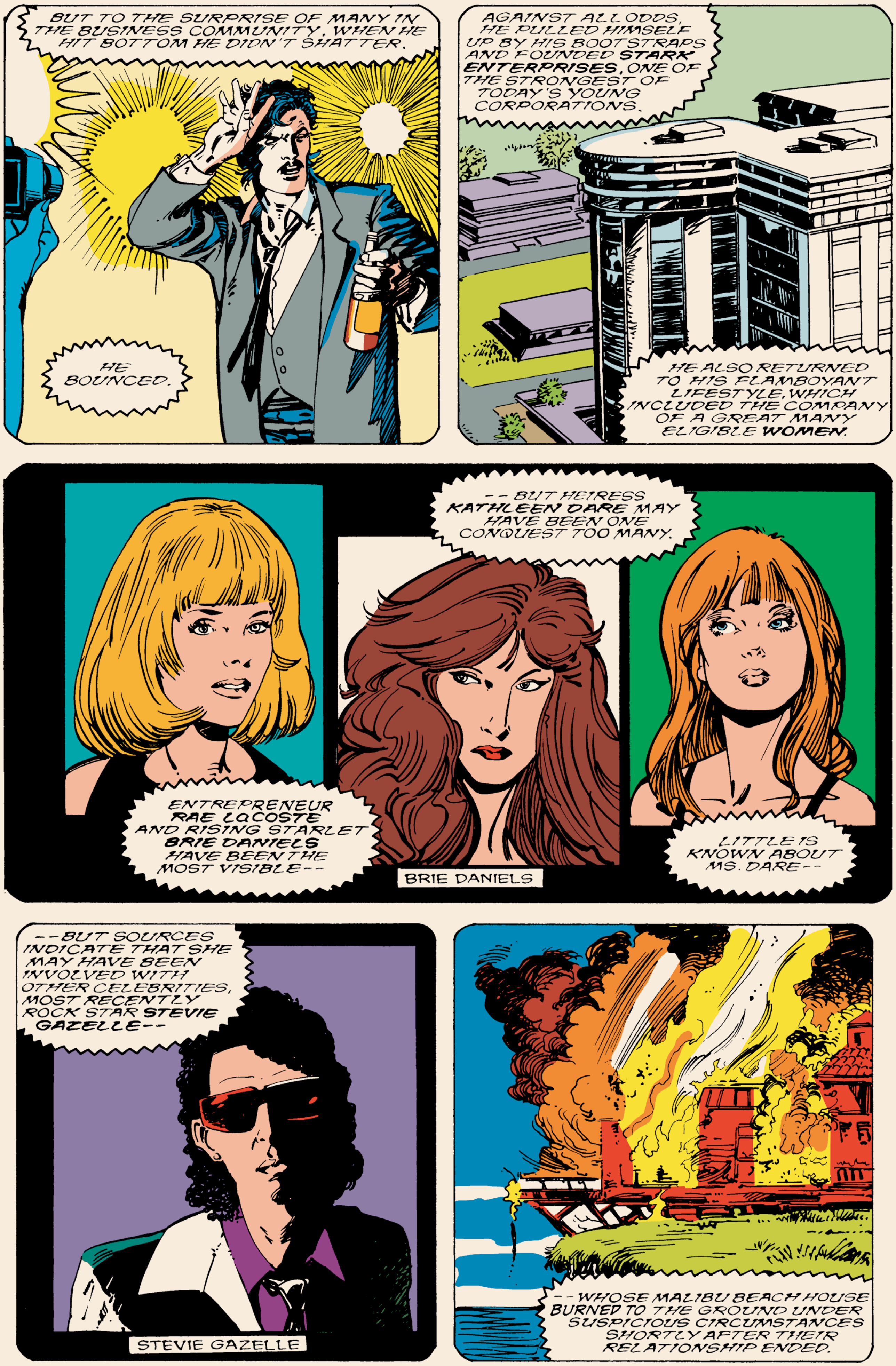

SE
OF COURSE, THE WORLD IS FAMILIAR WITH THE **PUBLIC** IMAGE OF ANTHONY STARK: THAT OF A MILLIONAIRE PLAYBOY WHO OCCASIONALLY DABBLES IN SCIENCE AND HIGH FINANCE.
BUT THE MAN **BEHIND** THE IMAGE IS FAR MORE COMPLEX.

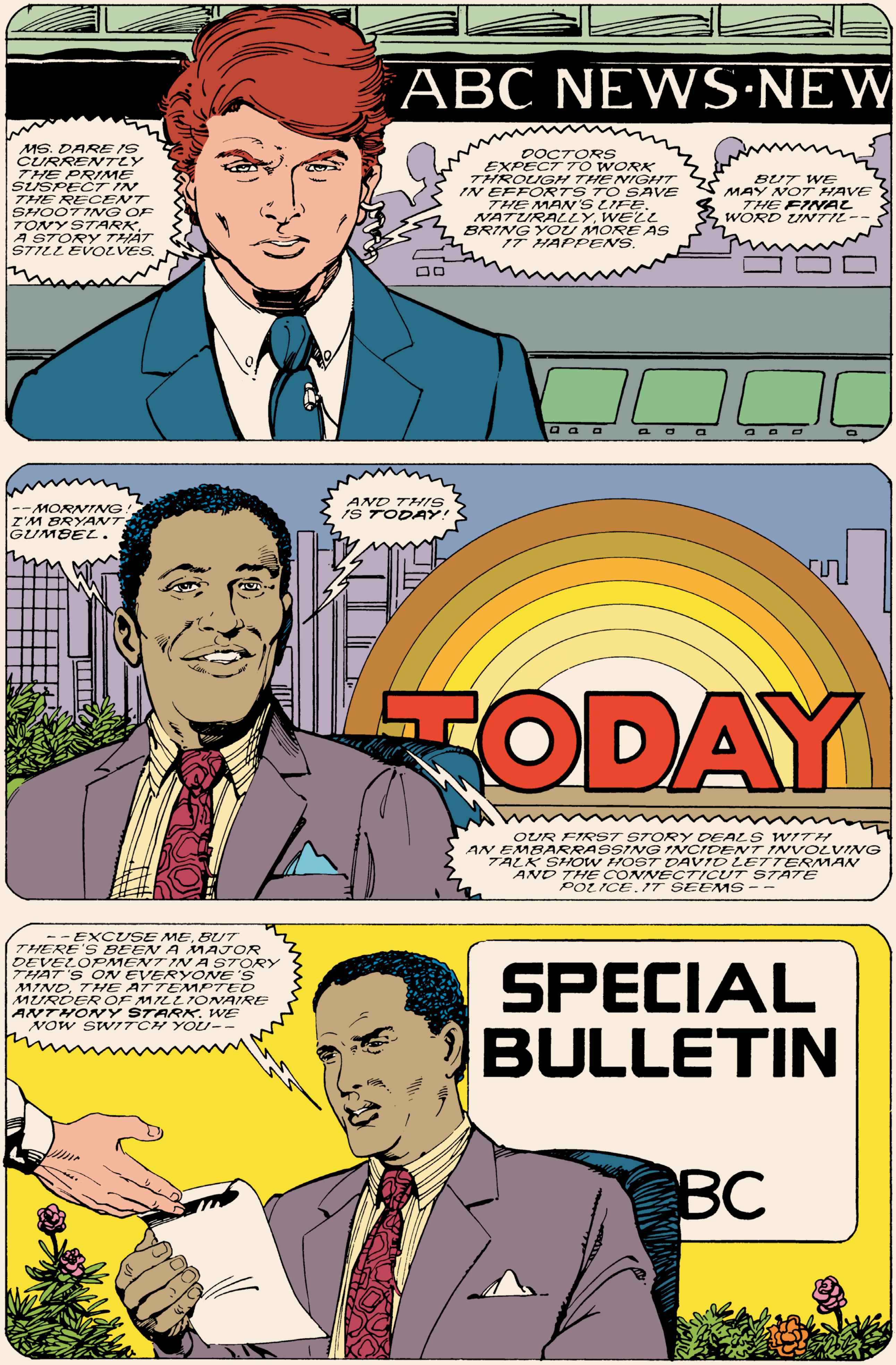

STARK INDUSTRIES
HAVING INHERITED A SMALL ELECTRONICS FIRM FROM HIS FATHER AT AN EARLY AGE, TONY STARK POURED HIS FULL ENERGIES INTO EXPANSION AND INNOVATION, EVENTUALLY BUILDING HIS HOLDINGS INTO THE GLOBE-SPANNING CORPORATION CALLED--

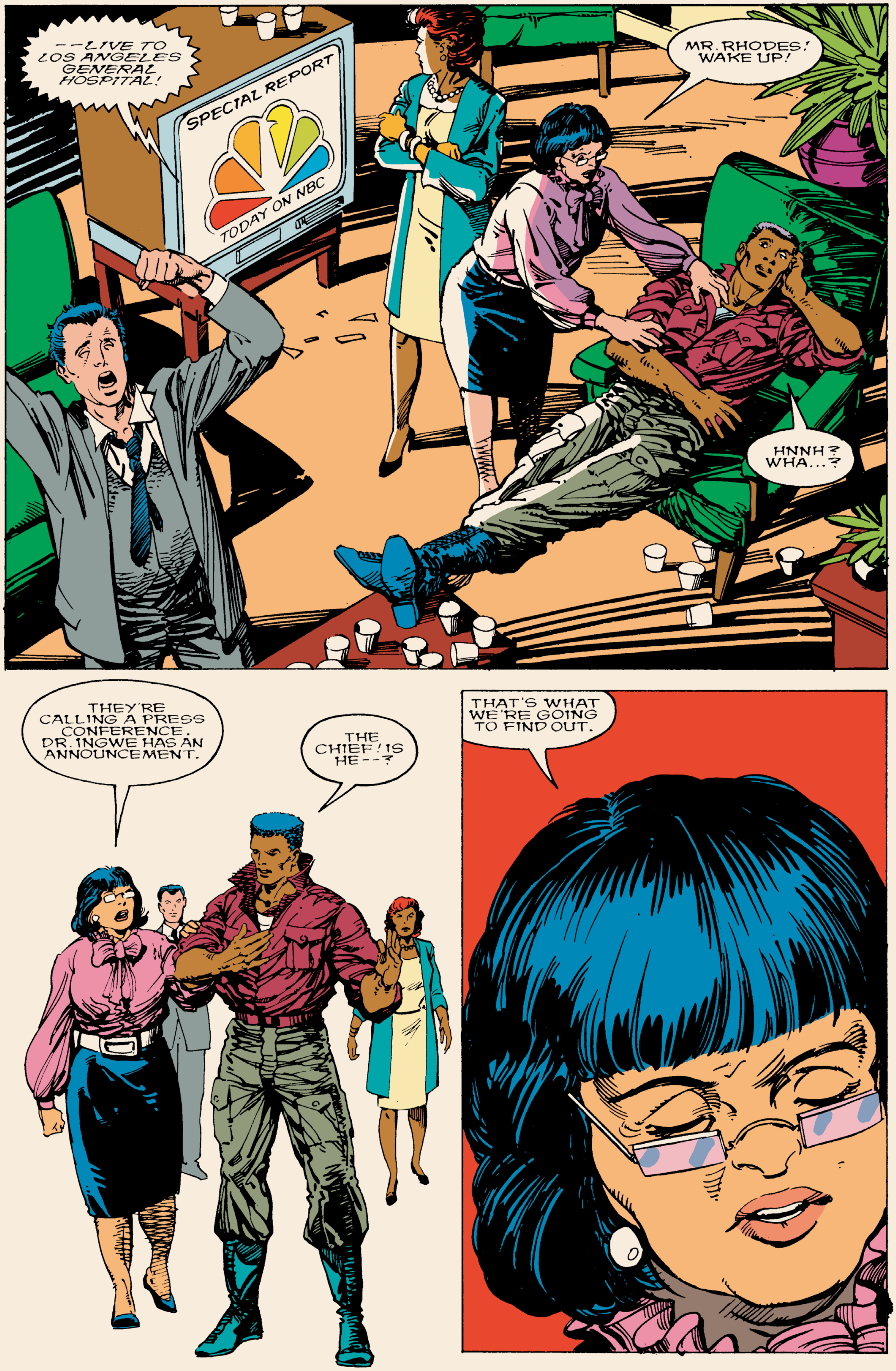

--STARK INTERNATIONAL.
WHILE ALONG THE WAY--

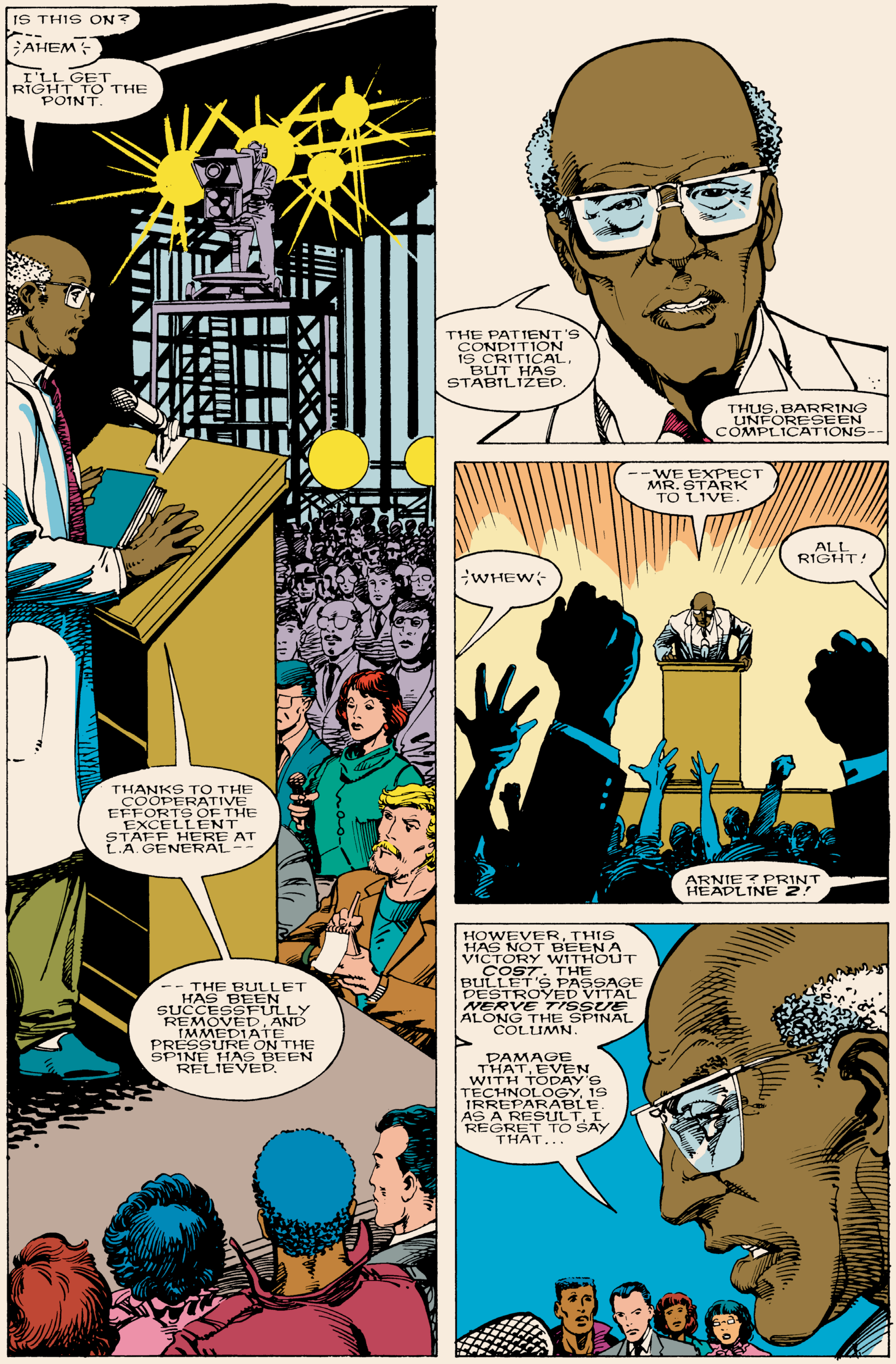

-- HE ALSO CREATED AN AMAZING SUIT OF MICROCIRCUITED **ARMOR**, THAT WHEN WORN BY AN UNIDENTIFIED EMPLOYEE, GAVE THE WORLD **IRON MAN**, FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE **AVENGERS** AND A MIGHTY FORCE FOR PEACE.

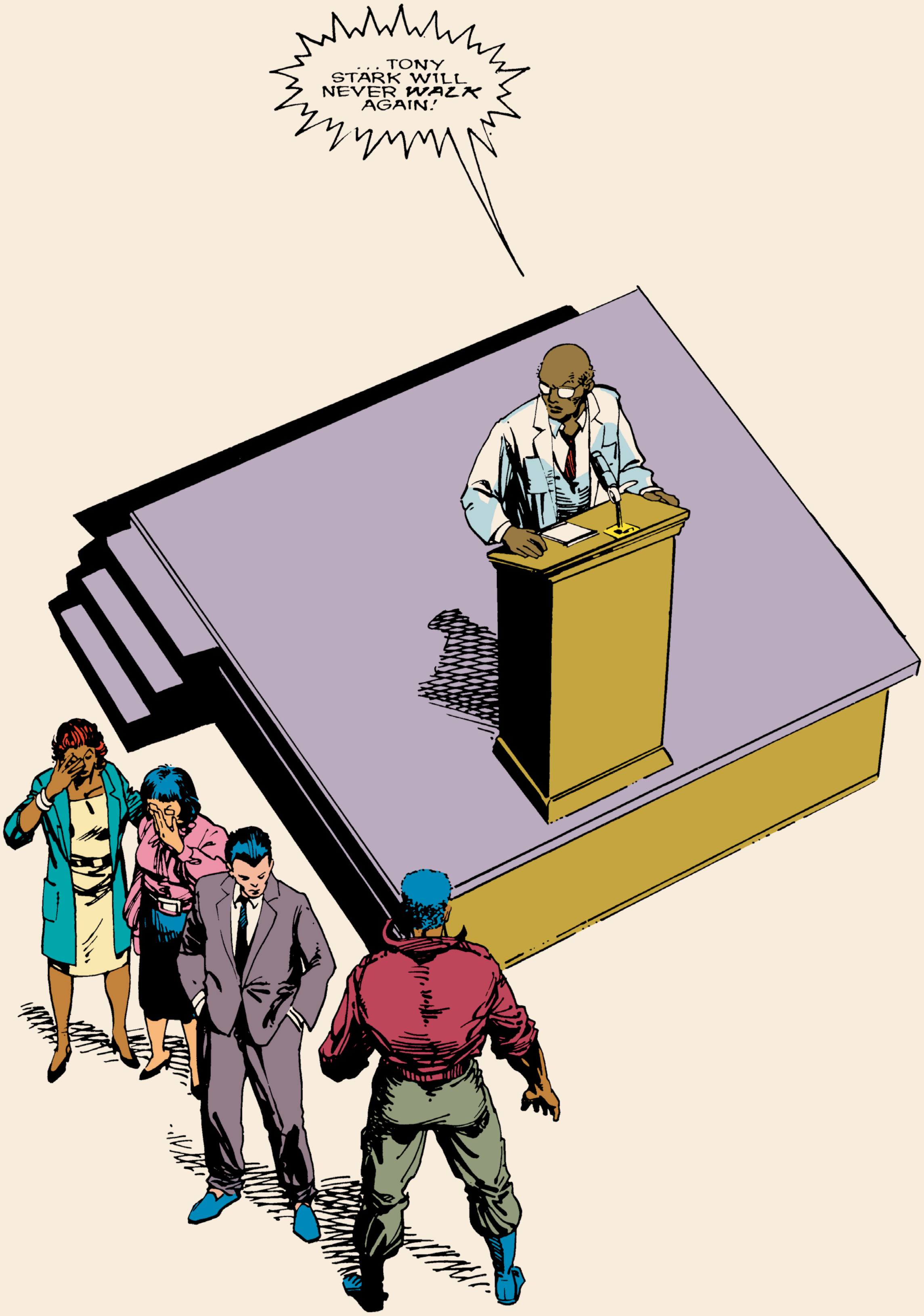

IN HIS OWN RIGHT, TONY STARK BECAME FAMOUS AS AN INEXHAUSTIBLE JET-SETTER.
--AND AS AN INVENTOR WHOSE GENIUS RIVALED THAT OF EDISON, MARCONI AND RICHARDS.
BUT THE FAIRY TALE ENDED WHEN STARK'S COMPANY WAS TAKEN OVER BY RUTHLESS RIVAL, **OBADIAH STANE**.
R
STANE
INTERNATIONAL
IT WAS THEN THAT, SUCCUMBING TO PRESSURES BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, STARK DROPPED FROM THE PAGES OF THE FINANCIAL SECTION--
--AND INTO THE HEADLINES OF THE **TABLOIDS**, BATTLING AN OLD FOE HE HAD ONCE FOUGHT TO A STANDSTILL: **ALCOHOL**. ONLY THIS TIME--
--HE LOST.


BUT TO THE SURPRISE OF MANY IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, WHEN HE HIT BOTTOM HE DIDN'T SHATTER.
HE BOUNCED.
AGAINST ALL ODDS, HE PULLED HIMSELF UP BY HIS BOOTSTRAPS AND FOUNDED **STARK ENTERPRISES**, ONE OF THE STRONGEST OF TODAY'S YOUNG CORPORATIONS.
HE ALSO RETURNED TO HIS FLAMBOYANT LIFESTYLE, WHICH INCLUDED THE COMPANY OF A GREAT MANY ELIGIBLE **WOMEN**.
ENTREPRENEUR **RAE LACOSTE** AND RISING STARLET **BRIE DANIELS** HAVE BEEN THE MOST VISIBLE--
BRIE DANIELS
--BUT HEIRESS **KATHLEEN DARE** MAY HAVE BEEN ONE CONQUEST TOO MANY.
LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT MS. DARE--
--BUT SOURCES INDICATE THAT SHE MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH OTHER CELEBRITIES, MOST RECENTLY ROCK STAR **STEVIE GAZELLE**--
STEVIE GAZELLE
--WHOSE MALIBU BEACH HOUSE BURNED TO THE GROUND UNDER SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES SHORTLY AFTER THEIR RELATIONSHIP ENDED.

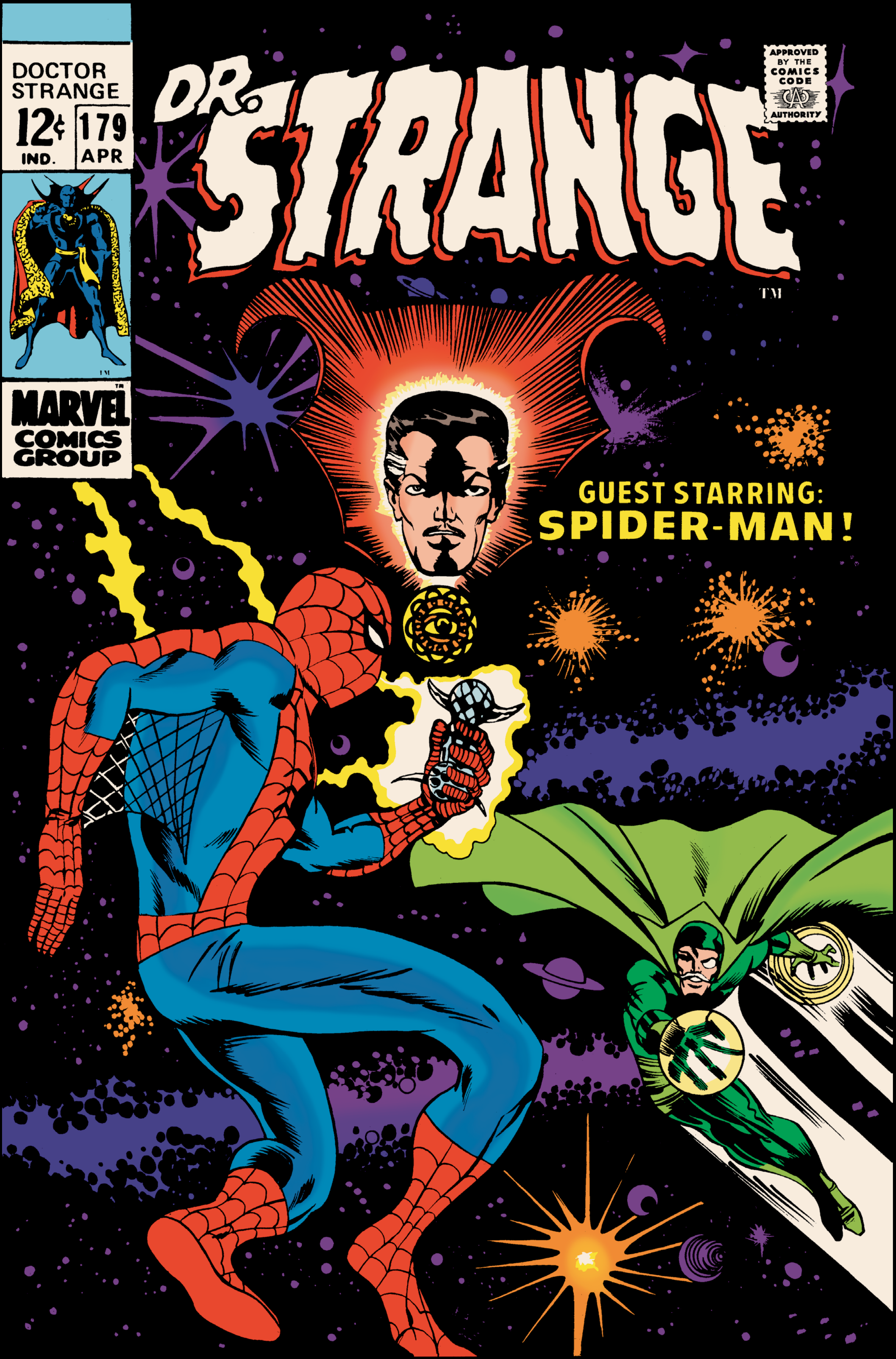

ABC NEWS·NEW
MS. DARE IS CURRENTLY THE PRIME SUSPECT IN THE RECENT SHOOTING OF TONY STARK, A STORY THAT STILL EVOLVES.
DOCTORS EXPECT TO WORK THROUGH THE NIGHT IN EFFORTS TO SAVE THE MAN'S LIFE. NATURALLY, WE'LL BRING YOU MORE AS IT HAPPENS.
BUT WE MAY NOT HAVE THE **FINAL** WORD UNTIL--
--MORNING! I'M BRYANT GUMBEL.
AND THIS IS **TODAY**!
TODAY
OUR FIRST STORY DEALS WITH AN EMBARRASSING INCIDENT INVOLVING TALK SHOW HOST DAVID LETTERMAN AND THE CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE. IT SEEMS--
--EXCUSE ME, BUT THERE'S BEEN A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN A STORY THAT'S ON EVERYONE'S MIND, THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF MILLIONAIRE **ANTHONY STARK**. WE NOW SWITCH YOU--
SPECIAL BULLETIN
BC

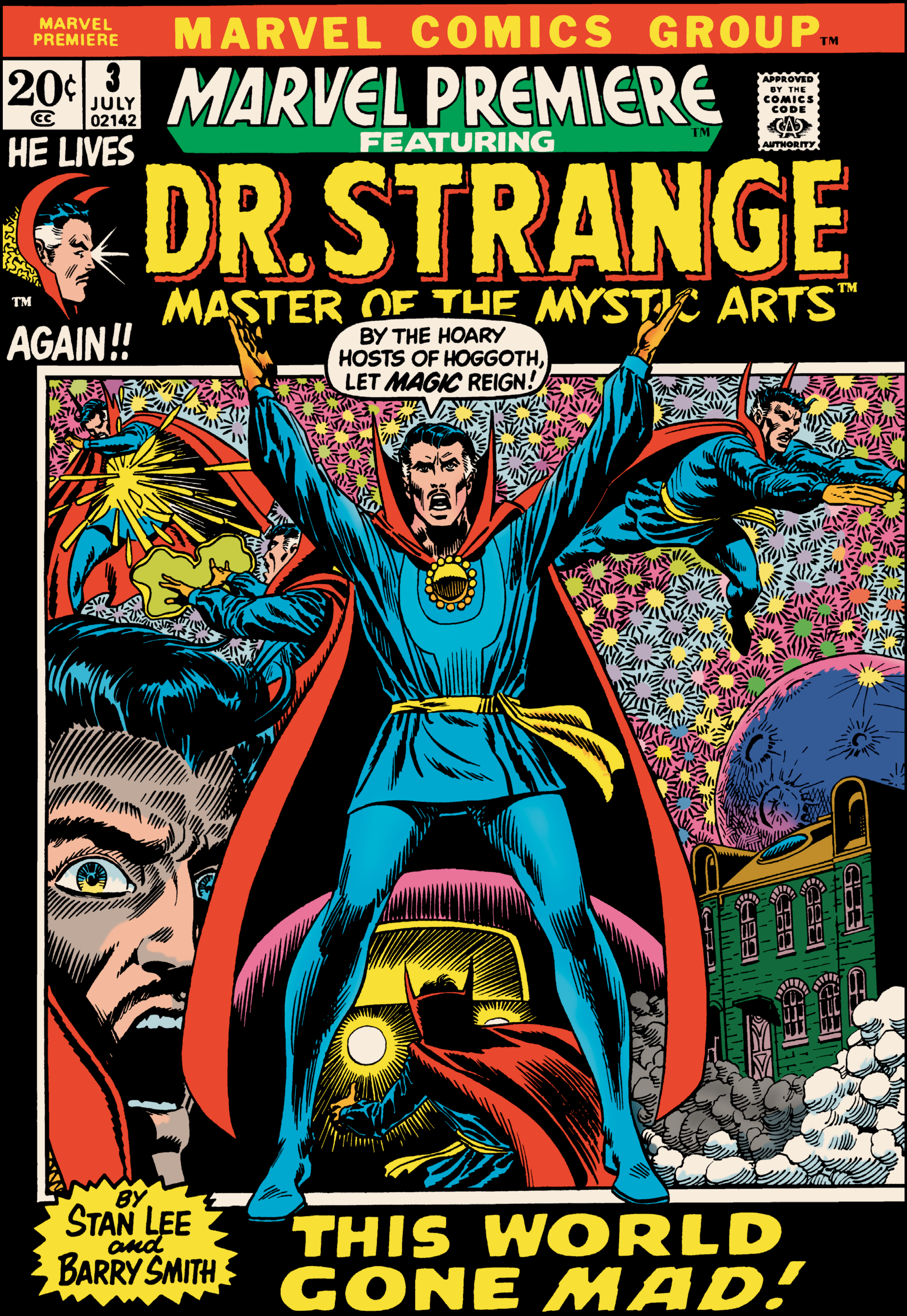

--LIVE TO LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL!
SPECIAL REPORT
TODAY ON NBC
MR. RHODES! WAKE UP!
HNNH? WHA...?
THEY'RE CALLING A PRESS CONFERENCE. DR. INGWE HAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT.
THE CHIEF! IS HE--?
THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT.

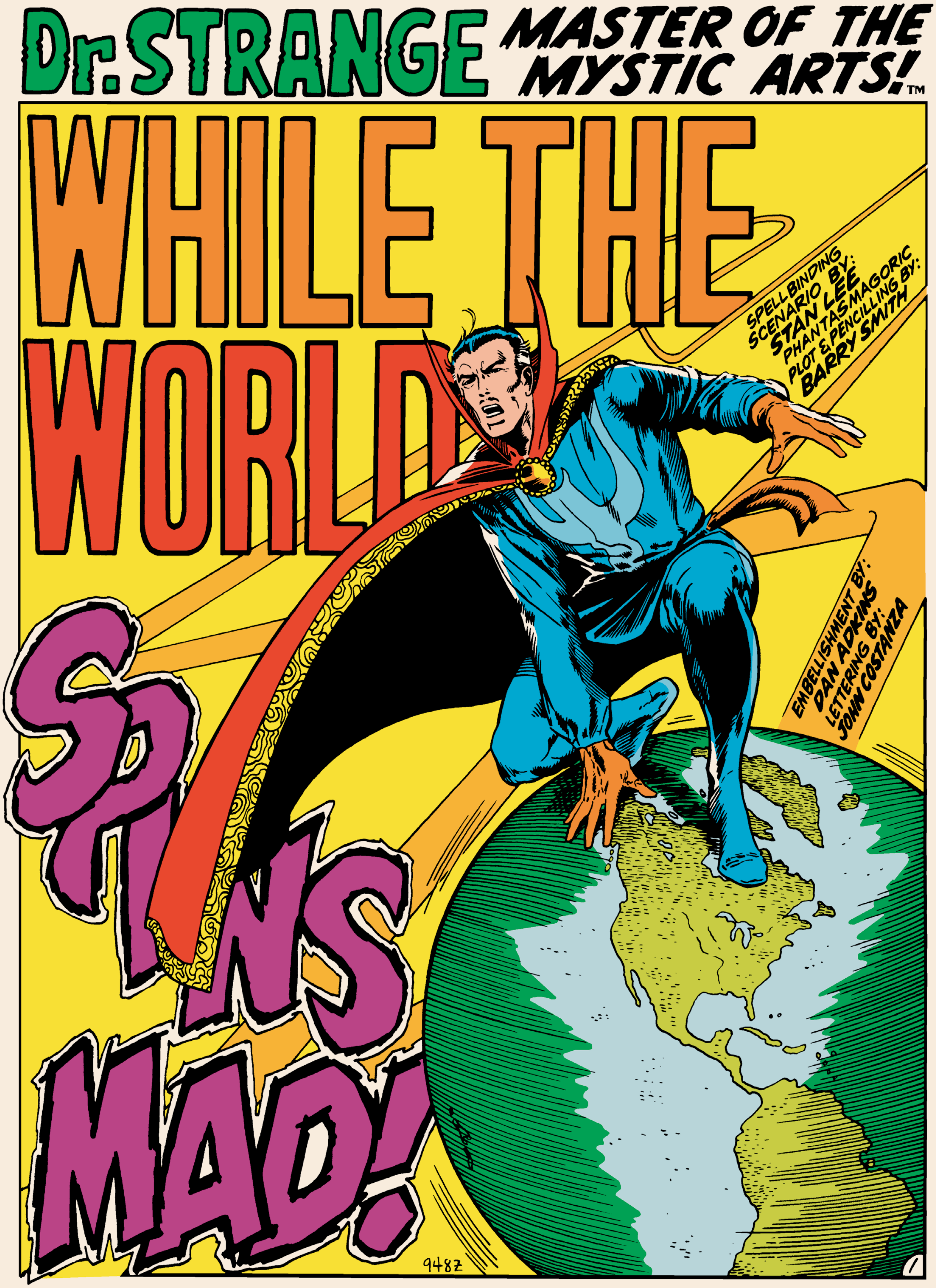

IS THIS ON?
;AHEM;
I'LL GET RIGHT TO THE POINT.
THANKS TO THE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF THE EXCELLENT STAFF HERE AT L.A. GENERAL--
--THE BULLET HAS BEEN SUCCESSFULLY REMOVED, AND IMMEDIATE PRESSURE ON THE SPINE HAS BEEN RELIEVED.
THE PATIENT'S CONDITION IS CRITICAL, BUT HAS STABILIZED.
THUS, BARRING UNFORESEEN COMPLICATIONS--
--WE EXPECT MR. STARK TO LIVE.
;WHEW;
ALL RIGHT!
ARNIE? PRINT HEADLINE *2*!
HOWEVER, THIS HAS NOT BEEN A VICTORY WITHOUT *COST*. THE BULLET'S PASSAGE DESTROYED VITAL *NERVE TISSUE* ALONG THE SPINAL COLUMN.
DAMAGE THAT, EVEN WITH TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY, IS IRREPARABLE. AS A RESULT, I REGRET TO SAY THAT...

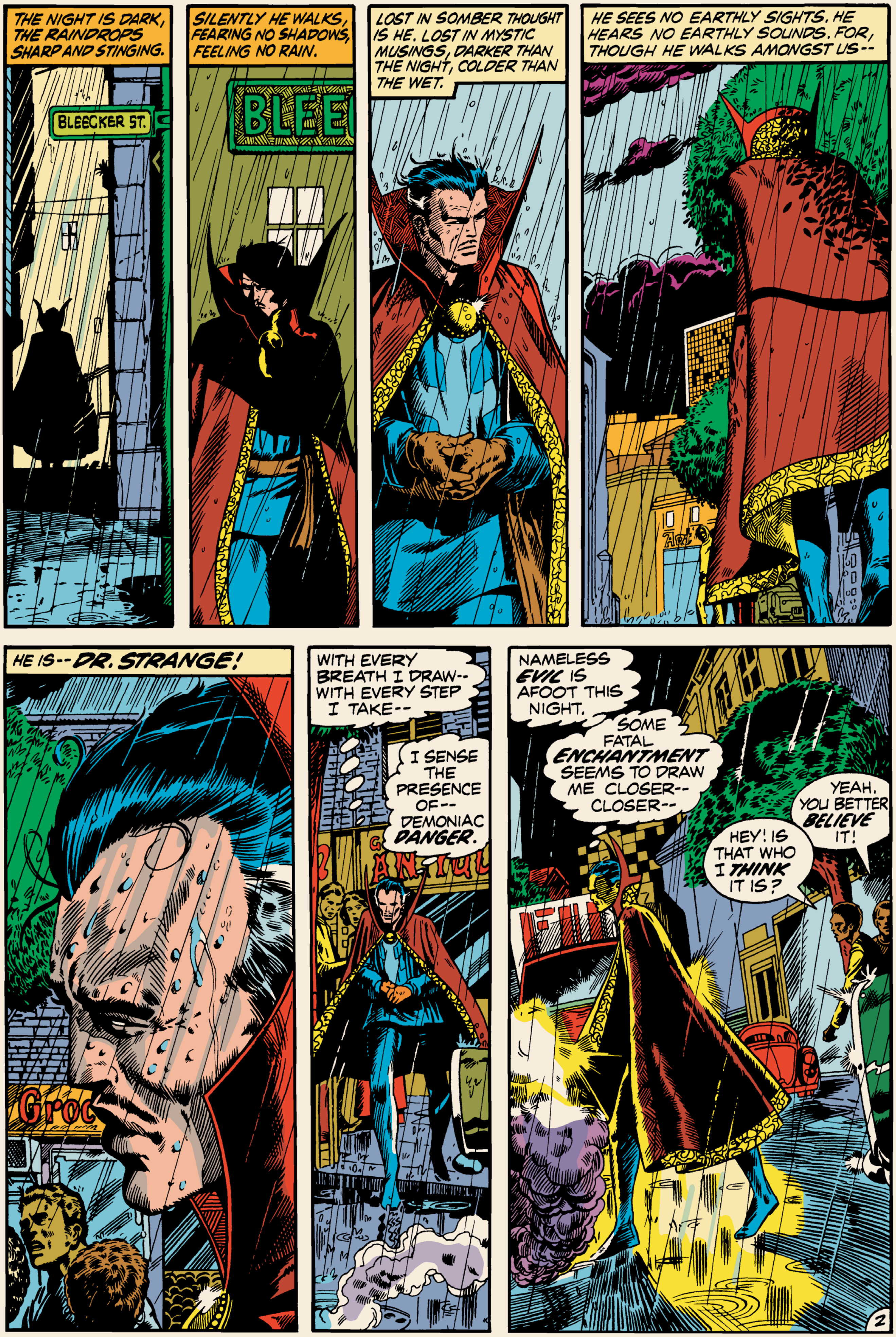

...TONY STARK WILL NEVER WALK AGAIN!

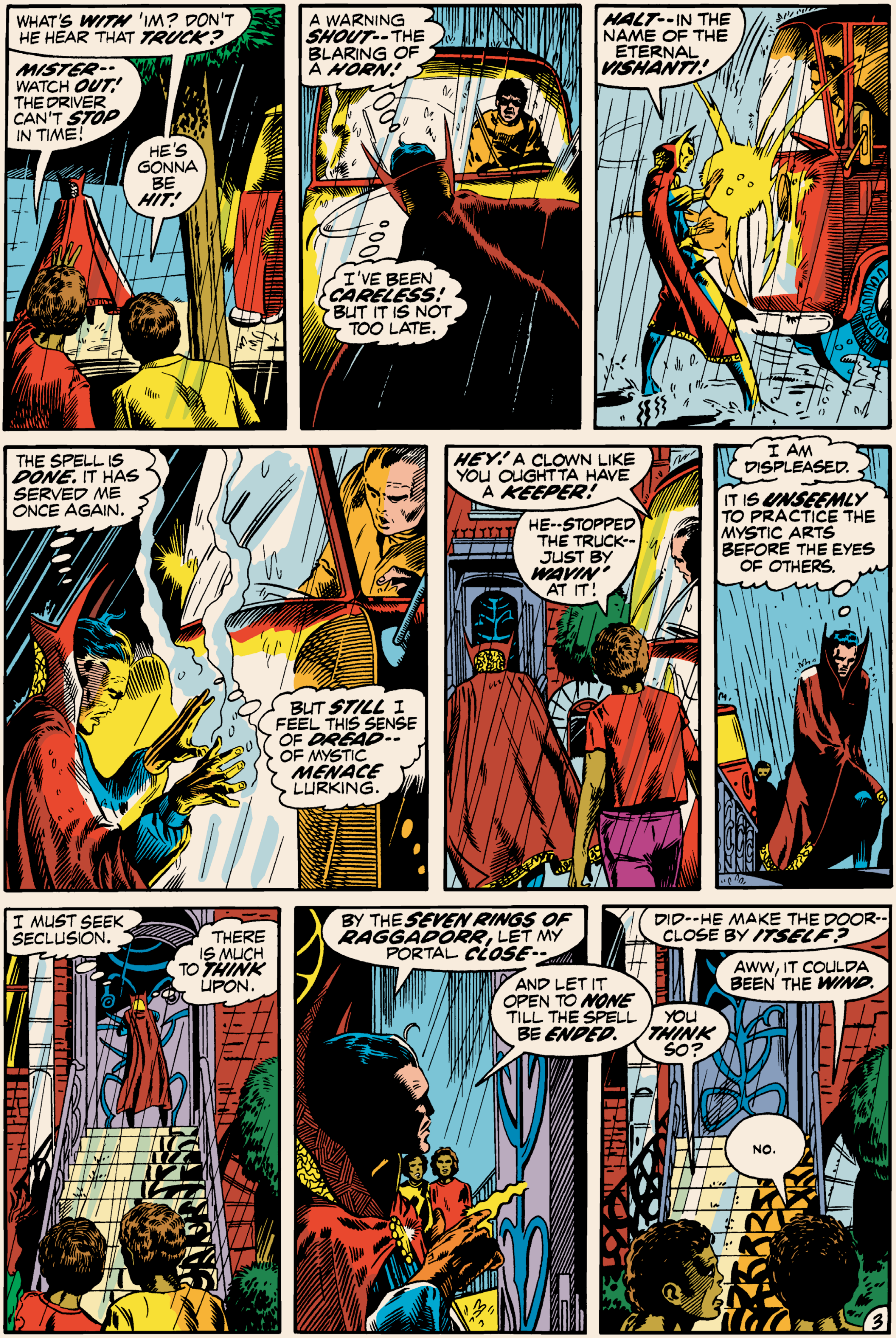
This was Windsor-Smith's only issue as Bob Layton's inker on Iron Man. *Tony Stark did walk again, but not until issue #248. In the meantime, only Stark's armor allowed him to be ambulatory.*

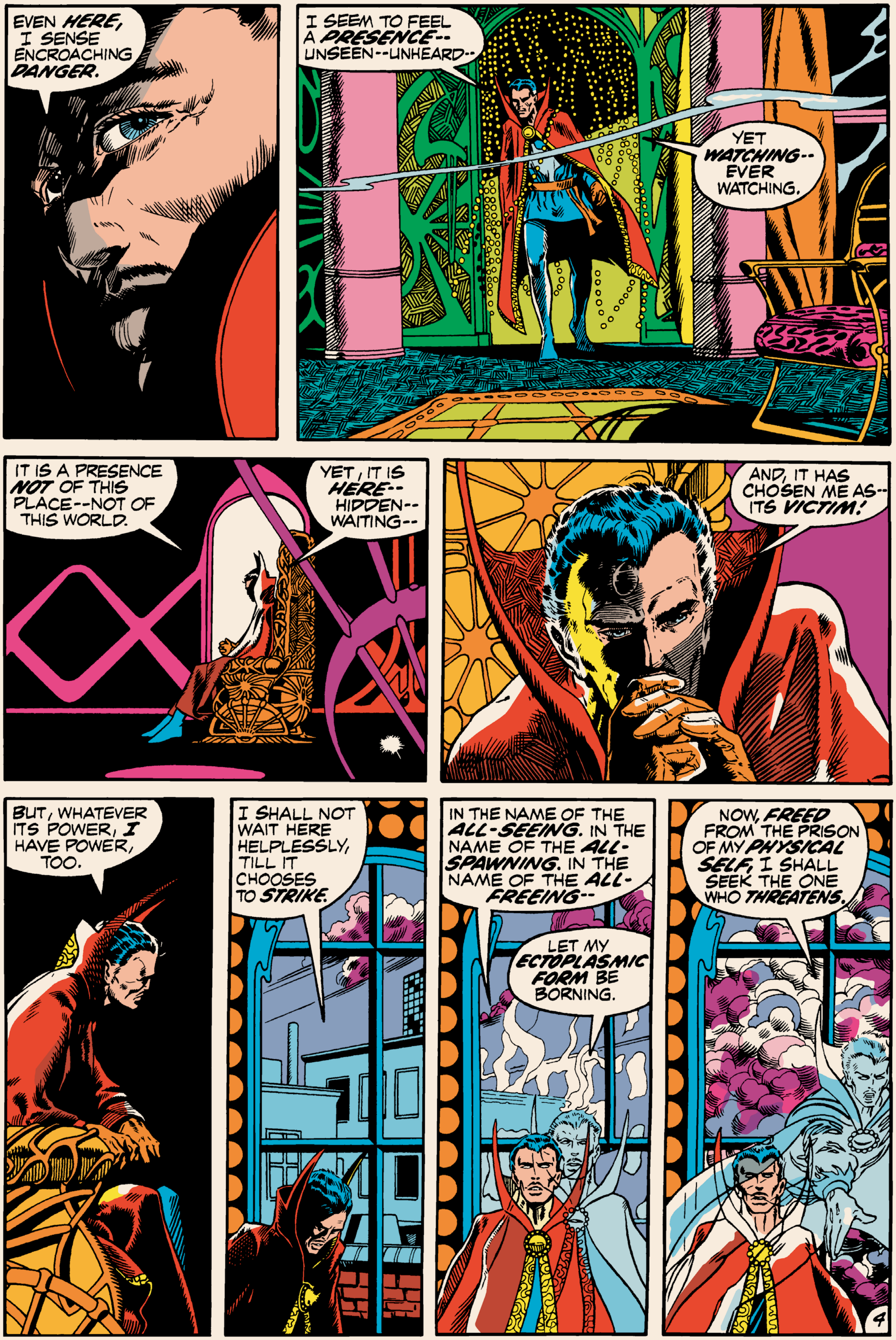

DOCTOR STRANGE
12¢ IND.
179 APR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
DR. STRANGE
TM
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
GUEST STARRING: SPIDER-MAN!

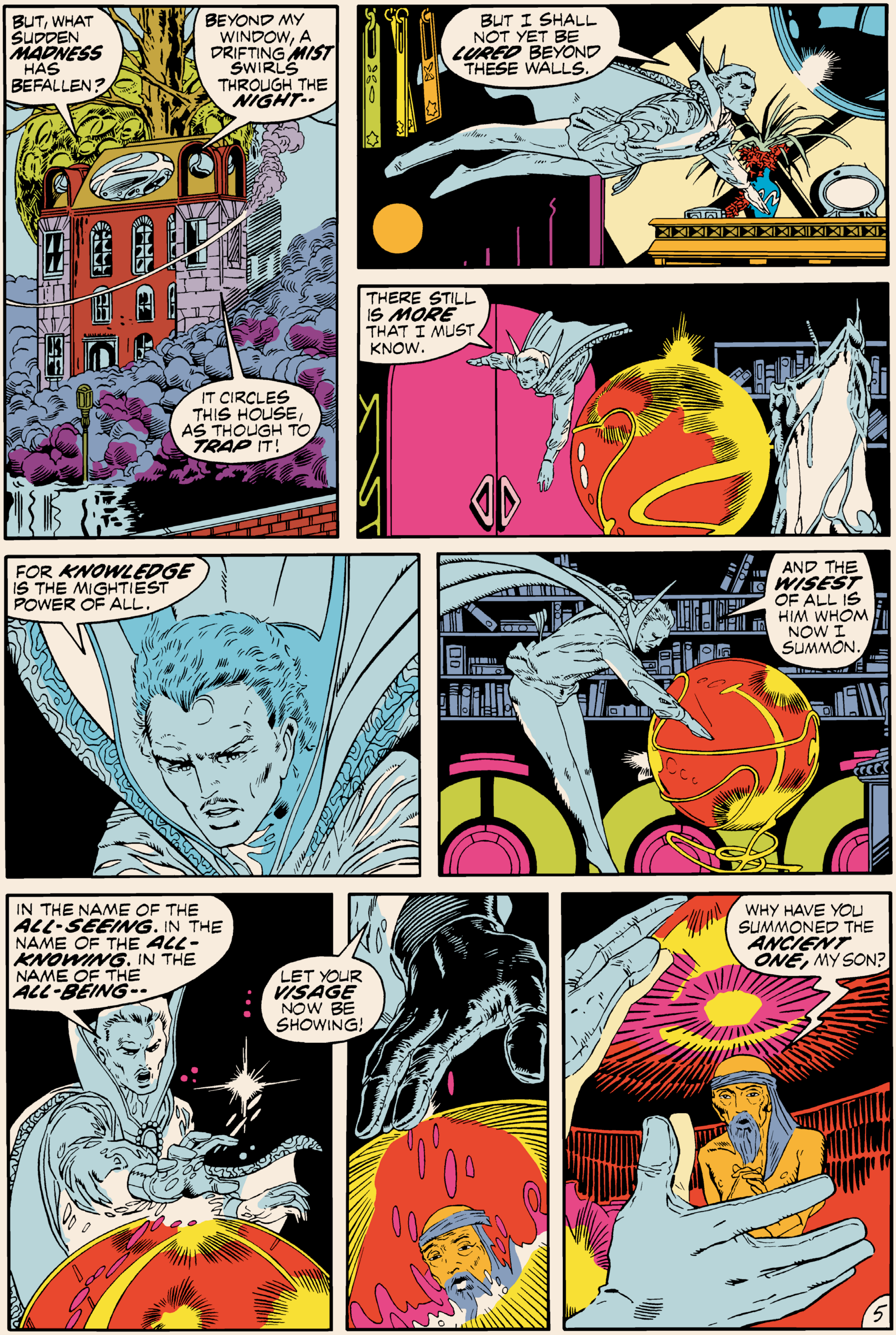

MARVEL PREMIERE
MARVEL COMICS GROUP™
20¢
CC
3
JULY
02142
MARVEL PREMIERE™
FEATURING
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
HE LIVES
™
AGAIN!!
DR. STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS™
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH, LET MAGIC REIGN!
BY STAN LEE and BARRY SMITH
THIS WORLD GONE MAD!

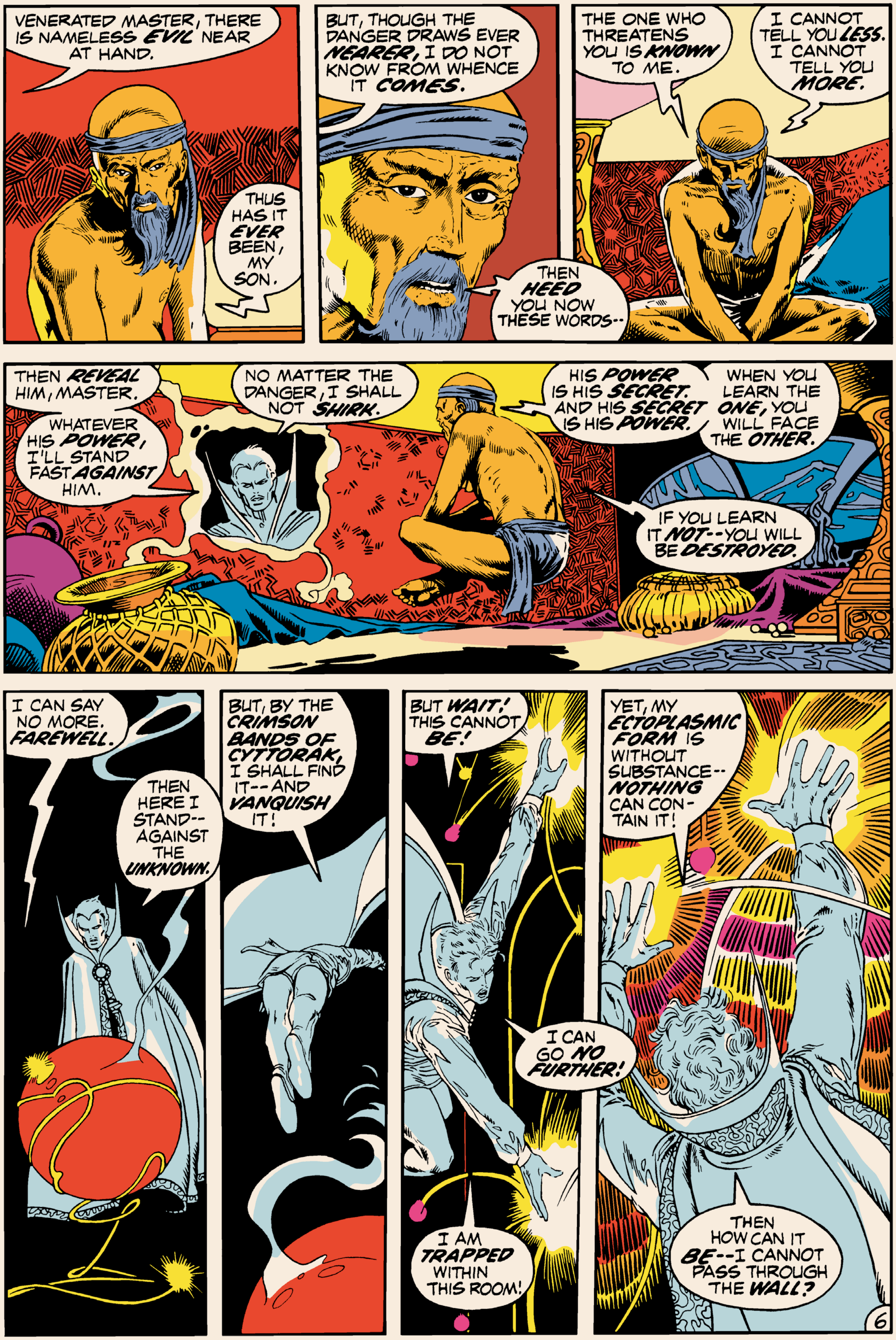

Dr. STRANGE
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™
WHILE THE WORLD SPINS MAD!
SPELLBINDING SCENARIO BY: STAN LEE
PHANTASMAGORIC PLOT & PENCILLING BY: BARRY SMITH
EMBELLISHMENT BY: DAN ADKINS
LETTERING BY: JOHN COSTANZA
9482
1

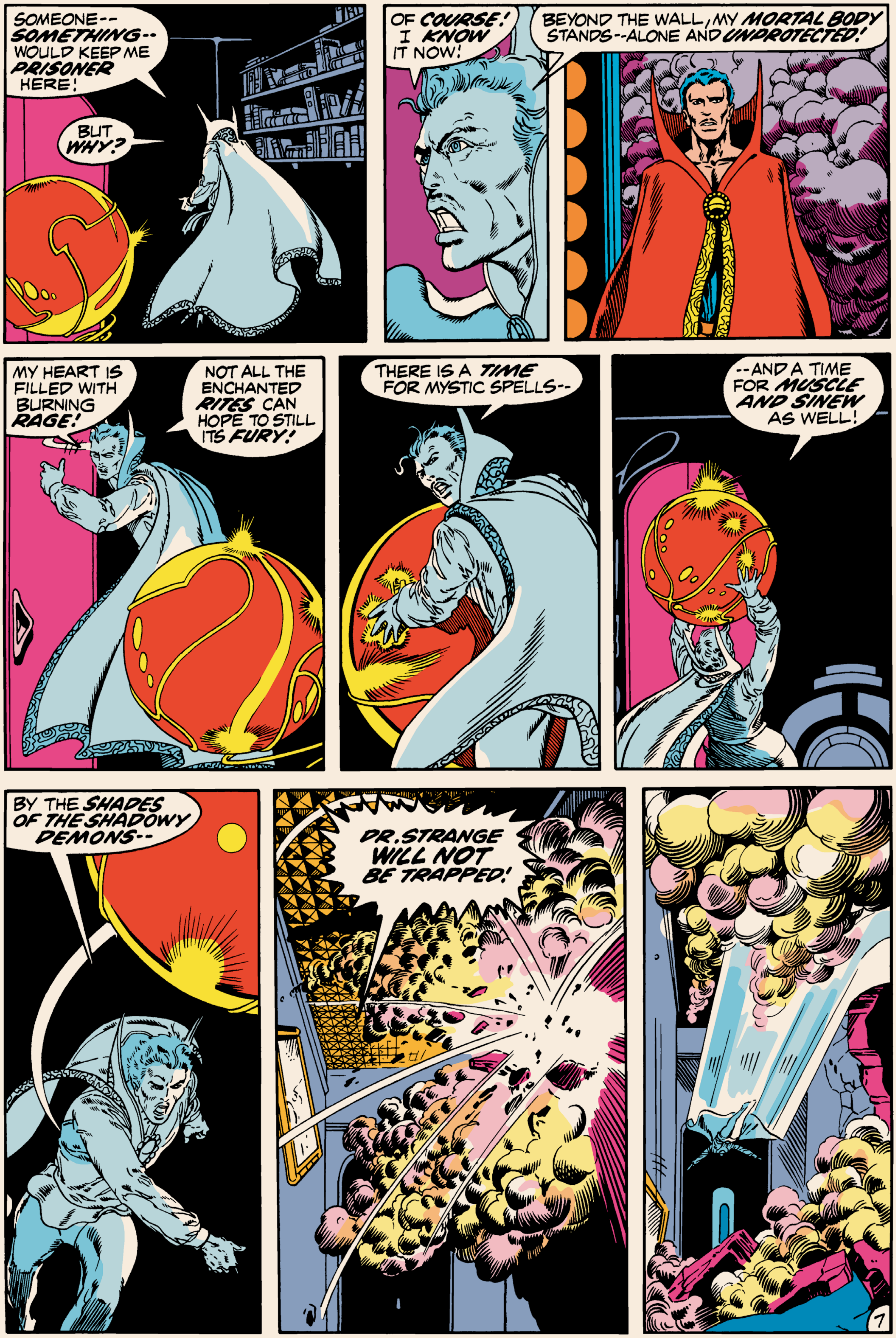

THE NIGHT IS DARK, THE RAINDROPS SHARP AND STINGING.
BLEECKER ST.
SILENTLY HE WALKS, FEARING NO SHADOWS, FEELING NO RAIN.
BLEE
LOST IN SOMBER THOUGHT IS HE. LOST IN MYSTIC MUSINGS, DARKER THAN THE NIGHT, COLDER THAN THE WET.
HE SEES NO EARTHLY SIGHTS. HE HEARS NO EARTHLY SOUNDS. FOR, THOUGH HE WALKS AMONGST US--
HE IS--DR. STRANGE!
Groc
WITH EVERY BREATH I DRAW-- WITH EVERY STEP I TAKE--
I SENSE THE PRESENCE OF--DEMONIAC DANGER.
NAMELESS EVIL IS AFOOT THIS NIGHT.
SOME FATAL ENCHANTMENT SEEMS TO DRAW ME CLOSER-- CLOSER--
HEY! IS THAT WHO I THINK IT IS?
YEAH. YOU BETTER BELIEVE IT!
2

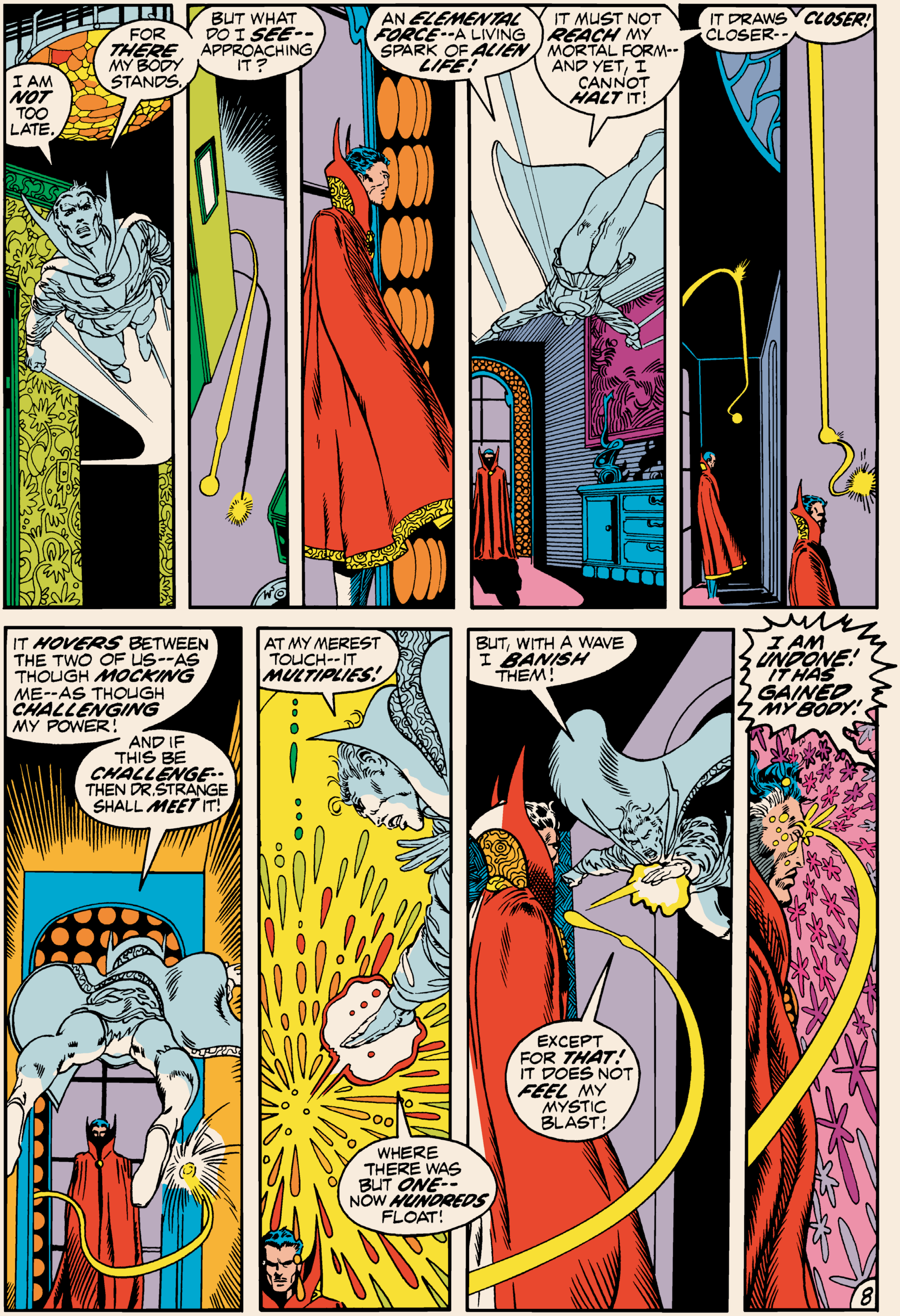

WHAT'S WITH 'IM? DON'T HE HEAR THAT TRUCK?
MISTER-- WATCH OUT! THE DRIVER CAN'T STOP IN TIME!
HE'S GONNA BE HIT!
A WARNING SHOUT--THE BLARING OF A HORN!
I'VE BEEN CARELESS! BUT IT IS NOT TOO LATE.
HALT--IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI!
THE SPELL IS DONE. IT HAS SERVED ME ONCE AGAIN.
BUT STILL I FEEL THIS SENSE OF DREAD-- OF MYSTIC MENACE LURKING.
HEY! A CLOWN LIKE YOU OUGHTTA HAVE A KEEPER!
HE--STOPPED THE TRUCK--JUST BY WAVIN' AT IT!
I AM DISPLEASED.
IT IS UNSEEMLY TO PRACTICE THE MYSTIC ARTS BEFORE THE EYES OF OTHERS.
I MUST SEEK SECLUSION.
THERE IS MUCH TO THINK UPON.
BY THE SEVEN RINGS OF RAGGADORR, LET MY PORTAL CLOSE--
AND LET IT OPEN TO NONE TILL THE SPELL BE ENDED.
DID--HE MAKE THE DOOR--CLOSE BY ITSELF?
AWW, IT COULDA BEEN THE WIND.
YOU THINK SO?
NO.
3

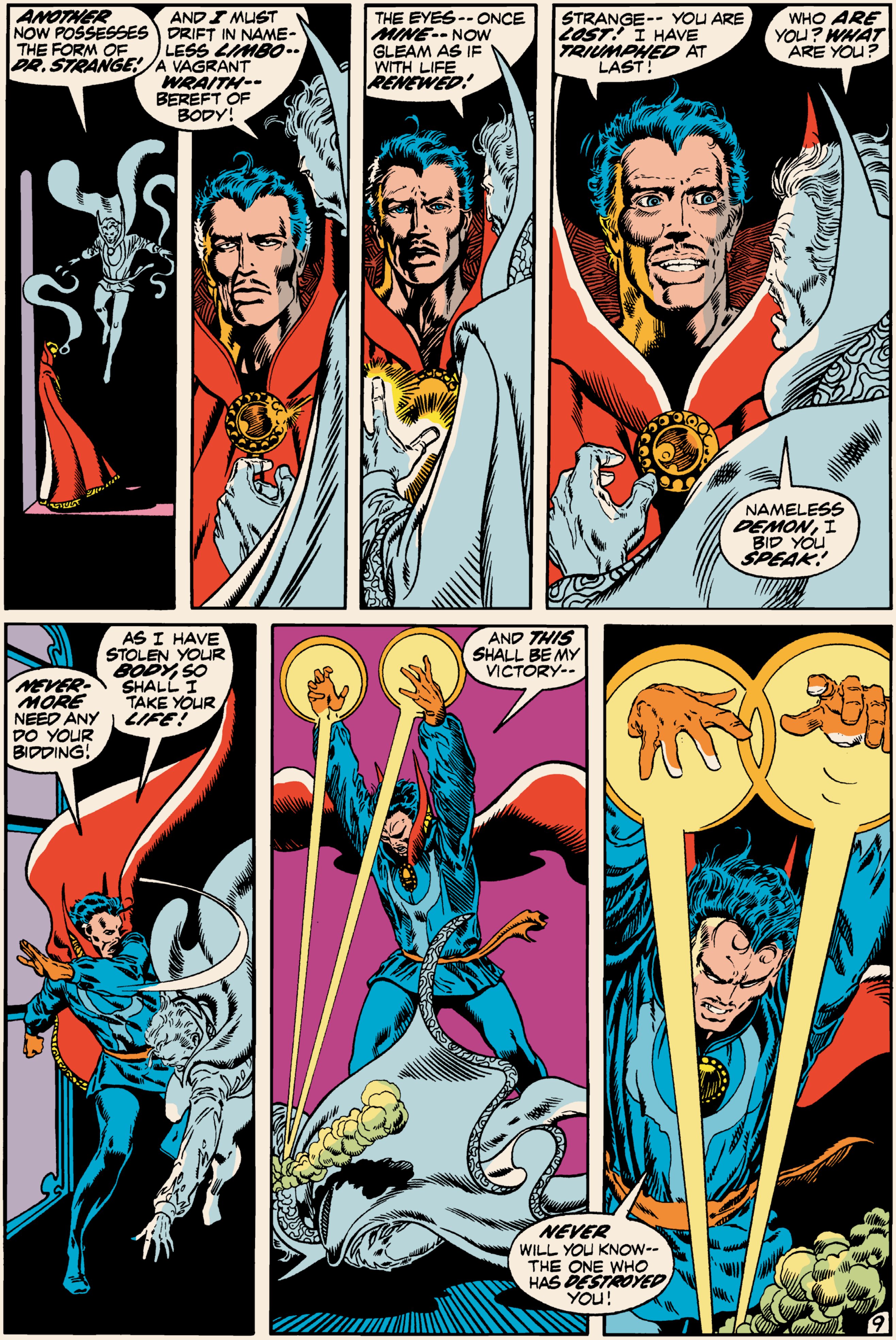

EVEN HERE, I SENSE ENCROACHING DANGER.
I SEEM TO FEEL A PRESENCE-- UNSEEN--UNHEARD--
YET WATCHING-- EVER WATCHING.
IT IS A PRESENCE NOT OF THIS PLACE--NOT OF THIS WORLD.
YET, IT IS HERE-- HIDDEN-- WAITING--
AND, IT HAS CHOSEN ME AS-- ITS VICTIM!
BUT, WHATEVER ITS POWER, I HAVE POWER, TOO.
I SHALL NOT WAIT HERE HELPLESSLY, TILL IT CHOOSES TO STRIKE.
IN THE NAME OF THE ALL-SEEING. IN THE NAME OF THE ALL-SPAWNING. IN THE NAME OF THE ALL-FREEING--
LET MY ECTOPLASMIC FORM BE BORNING.
NOW, FREED FROM THE PRISON OF MY PHYSICAL SELF, I SHALL SEEK THE ONE WHO THREATENS.
4

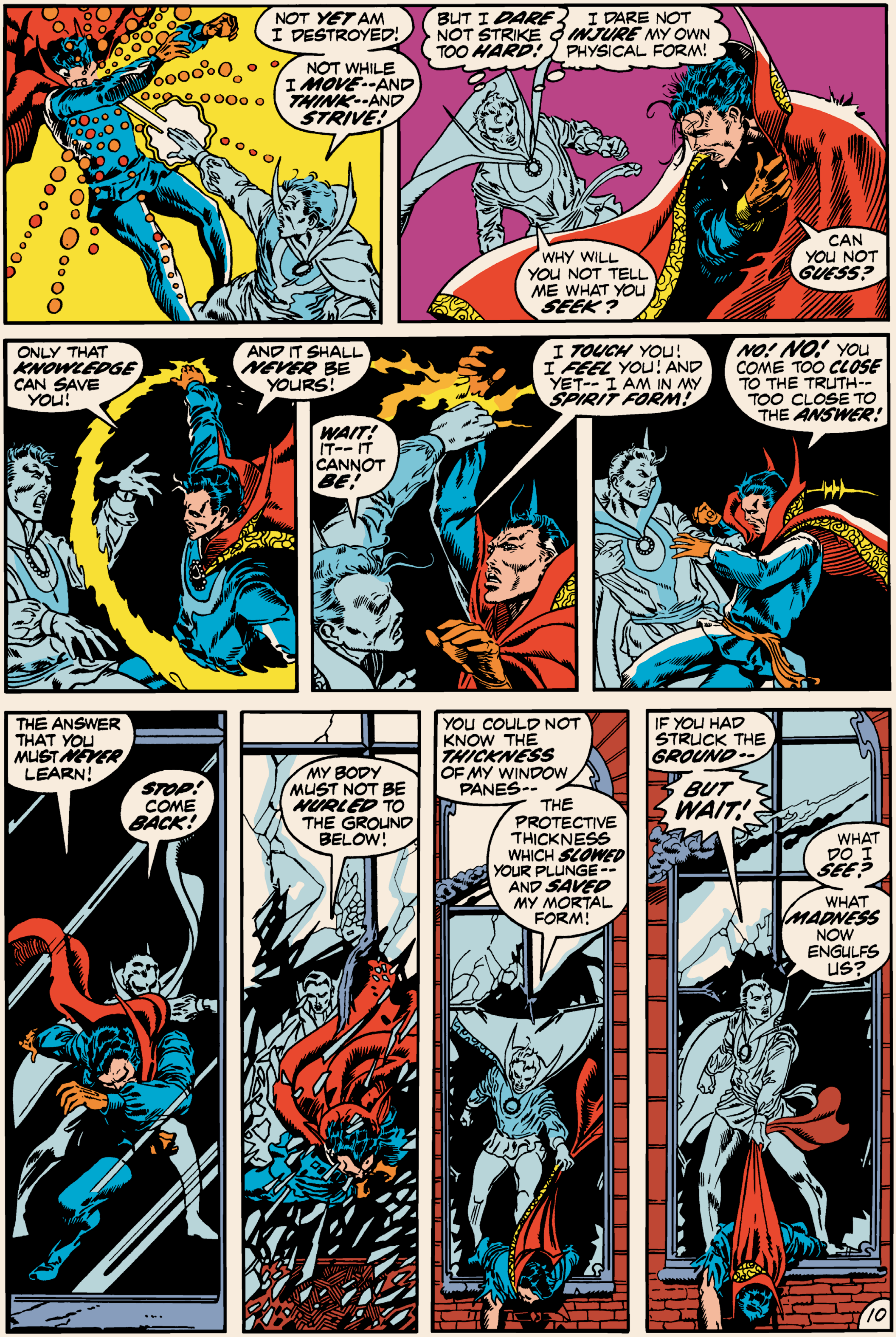

BUT, WHAT SUDDEN **MADNESS** HAS BEFALLEN?
BEYOND MY WINDOW, A DRIFTING **MIST** SWIRLS THROUGH THE **NIGHT**--
IT CIRCLES THIS HOUSE, AS THOUGH TO **TRAP** IT!
BUT I SHALL NOT YET BE **LURED** BEYOND THESE WALLS.
THERE STILL IS **MORE** THAT I MUST KNOW.
FOR **KNOWLEDGE** IS THE MIGHTIEST POWER OF ALL.
AND THE **WISEST** OF ALL IS HIM WHOM NOW I SUMMON.
IN THE NAME OF THE **ALL-SEEING**. IN THE NAME OF THE **ALL-KNOWING**. IN THE NAME OF THE **ALL-BEING**--
LET YOUR **VISAGE** NOW BE SHOWING!
WHY HAVE YOU SUMMONED THE **ANCIENT ONE,** MY SON?
5

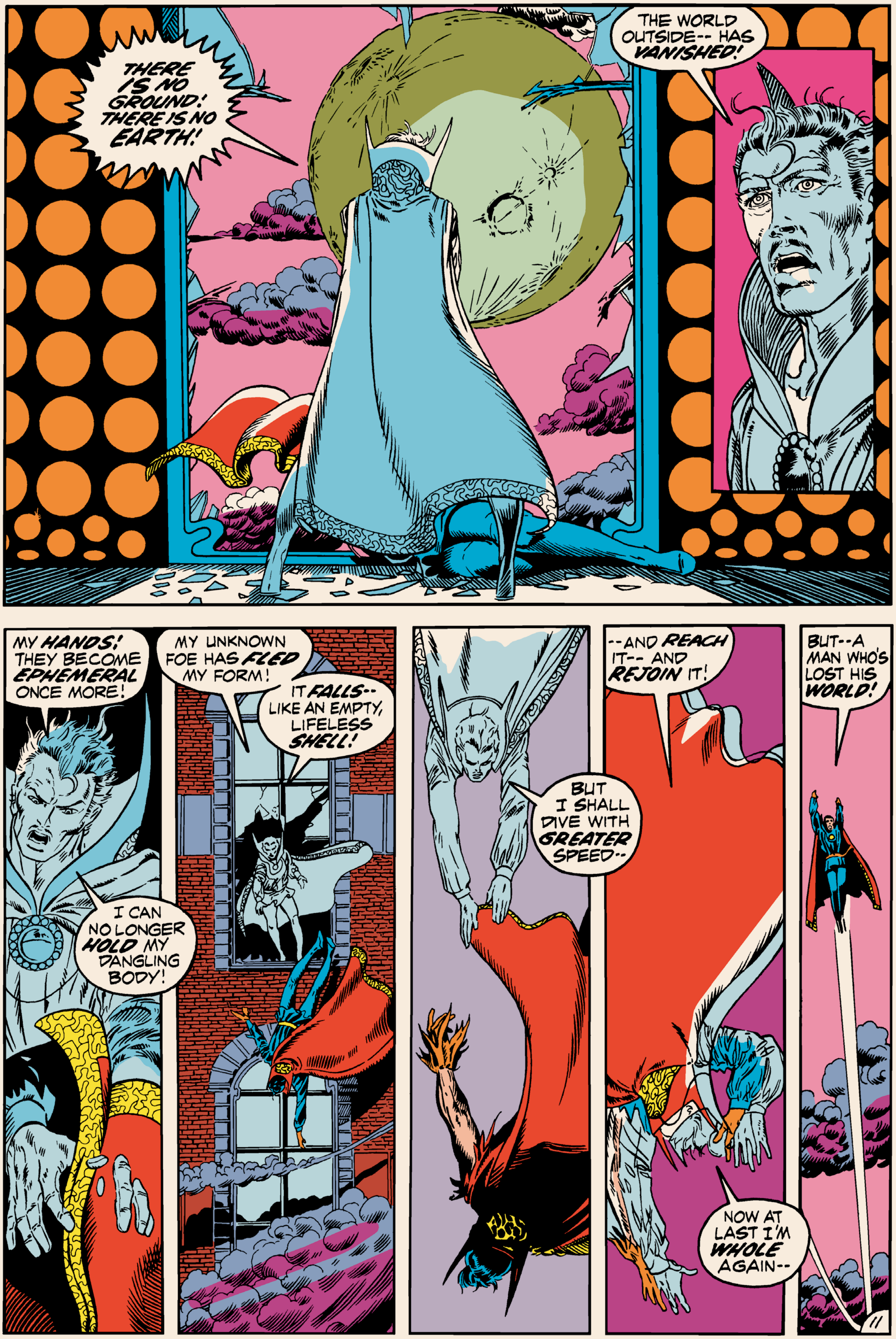

VENERATED MASTER, THERE IS NAMELESS *EVIL* NEAR AT HAND.
THUS HAS IT *EVER* BEEN, MY SON.
BUT, THOUGH THE DANGER DRAWS EVER *NEARER*, I DO NOT KNOW FROM WHENCE IT *COMES*.
THEN *HEED* YOU NOW THESE WORDS--
THE ONE WHO THREATENS YOU IS *KNOWN* TO ME.
I CANNOT TELL YOU *LESS*. I CANNOT TELL YOU *MORE*.
THEN *REVEAL* HIM, MASTER.
WHATEVER HIS *POWER*, I'LL STAND FAST *AGAINST* HIM.
NO MATTER THE DANGER, I SHALL NOT *SHIRK*.
HIS *POWER* IS HIS *SECRET*. AND HIS *SECRET* IS HIS *POWER*.
WHEN YOU LEARN THE *ONE*, YOU WILL FACE THE *OTHER*.
IF YOU LEARN IT *NOT*--YOU WILL BE *DESTROYED*.
I CAN SAY NO MORE. *FAREWELL*.
THEN HERE I STAND--AGAINST THE *UNKNOWN*.
BUT, BY THE *CRIMSON BANDS OF CYTTORAK*, I SHALL FIND IT--AND *VANQUISH* IT!
BUT *WAIT!* THIS CANNOT *BE!*
I CAN GO *NO FURTHER!*
I AM *TRAPPED* WITHIN THIS ROOM!
YET, MY *ECTOPLASMIC FORM* IS WITHOUT SUBSTANCE--*NOTHING* CAN CONTAIN IT!
THEN HOW CAN IT *BE*--I CANNOT PASS THROUGH THE *WALL?*
6

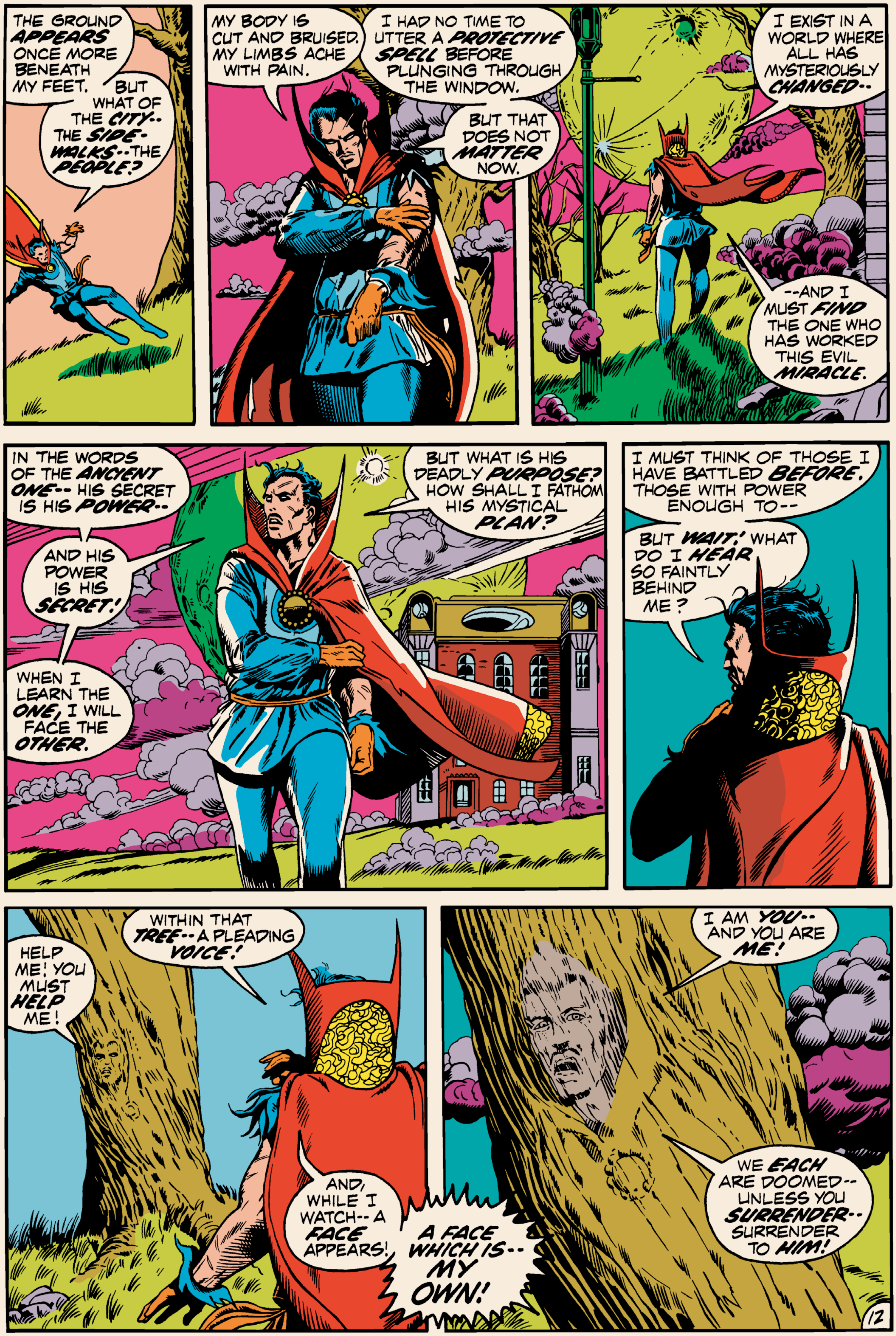

SOMEONE-- SOMETHING-- WOULD KEEP ME PRISONER HERE!
BUT WHY?
OF COURSE! I KNOW IT NOW!
BEYOND THE WALL, MY MORTAL BODY STANDS--ALONE AND UNPROTECTED!
MY HEART IS FILLED WITH BURNING RAGE!
NOT ALL THE ENCHANTED RITES CAN HOPE TO STILL ITS FURY!
THERE IS A TIME FOR MYSTIC SPELLS--
--AND A TIME FOR MUSCLE AND SINEW AS WELL!
BY THE SHADES OF THE SHADOWY DEMONS--
DR. STRANGE WILL NOT BE TRAPPED!
7

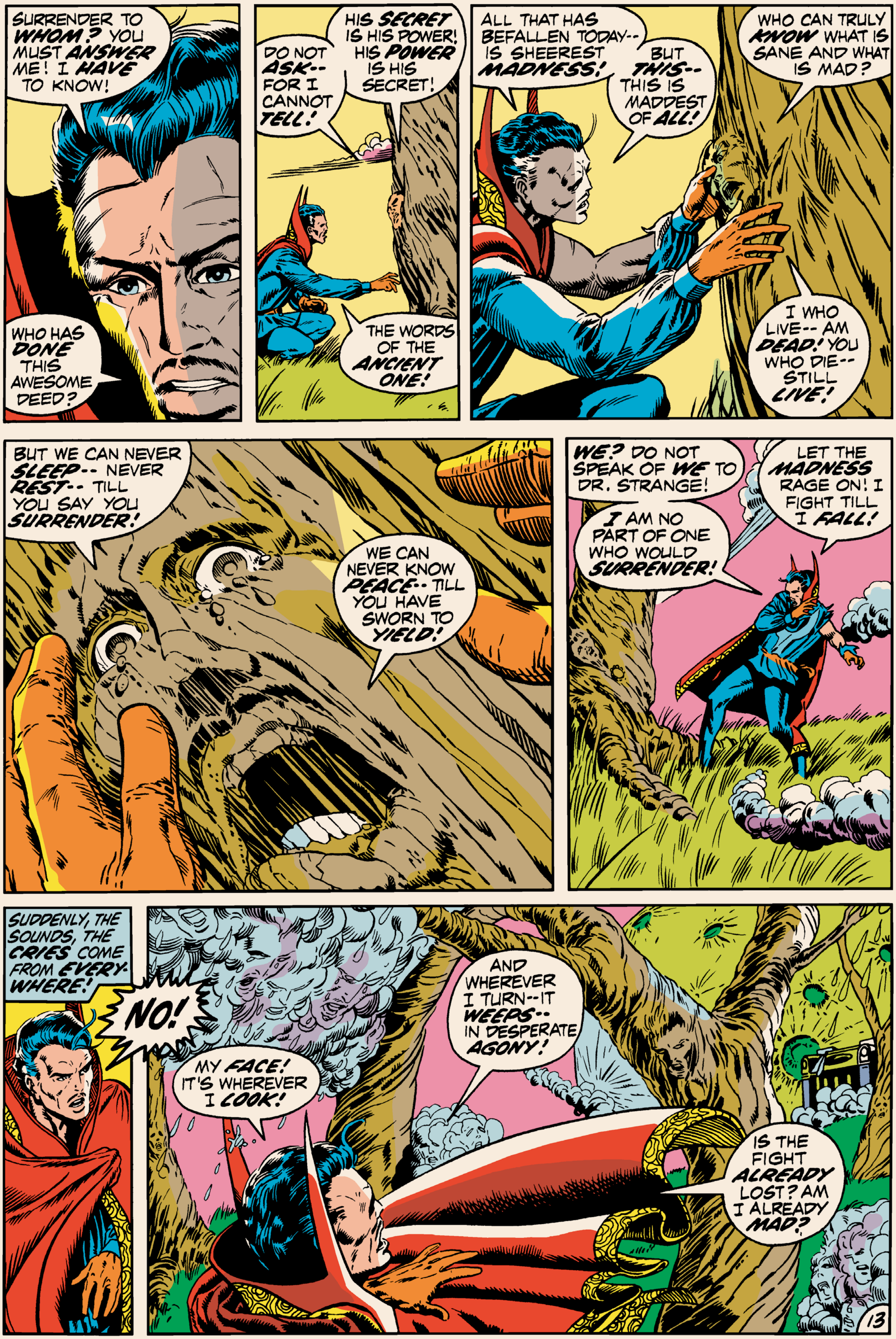

I AM *NOT* TOO LATE.
FOR *THERE* MY BODY STANDS.
BUT WHAT DO I *SEE*-- APPROACHING IT?
AN *ELEMENTAL FORCE*--A LIVING SPARK OF *ALIEN LIFE!*
IT MUST NOT *REACH* MY MORTAL FORM-- AND YET, I CANNOT *HALT* IT!
IT DRAWS CLOSER--
CLOSER!
IT *HOVERS* BETWEEN THE TWO OF US--AS THOUGH *MOCKING* ME--AS THOUGH *CHALLENGING* MY POWER!
AND IF THIS BE *CHALLENGE*-- THEN DR. STRANGE SHALL *MEET* IT!
AT MY MEREST TOUCH--IT *MULTIPLIES!*
WHERE THERE WAS BUT *ONE*-- NOW *HUNDREDS* FLOAT!
BUT, WITH A WAVE I *BANISH* THEM!
EXCEPT FOR *THAT!* IT DOES NOT *FEEL* MY MYSTIC BLAST!
I AM UNDONE! IT HAS GAINED MY BODY!
8

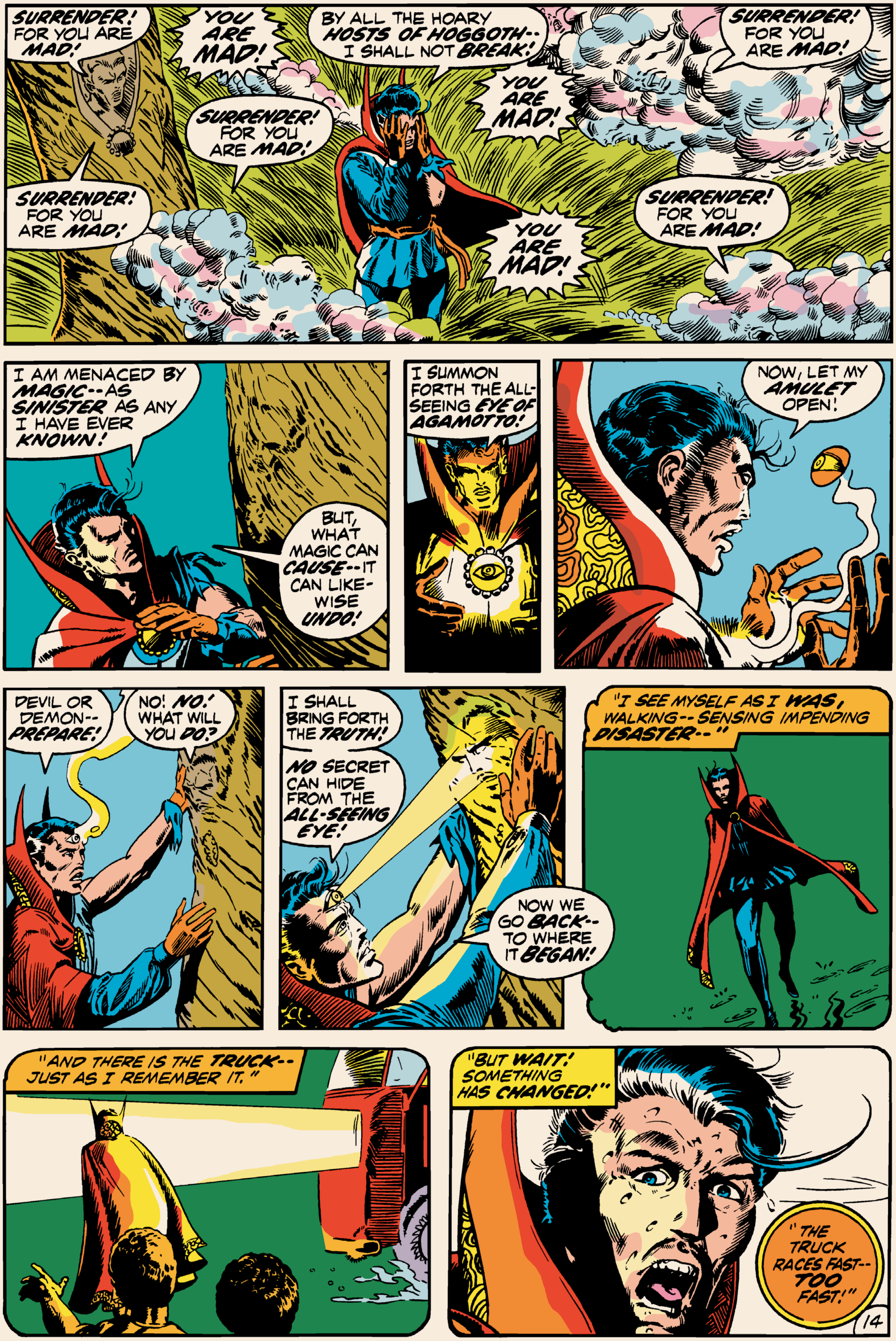

ANOTHER NOW POSSESSES THE FORM OF DR. STRANGE!
AND I MUST DRIFT IN NAMELESS LIMBO-- A VAGRANT WRAITH-- BEREFT OF BODY!
THE EYES--ONCE MINE--NOW GLEAM AS IF WITH LIFE RENEWED!
STRANGE-- YOU ARE LOST! I HAVE TRIUMPHED AT LAST!
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU?
NAMELESS DEMON, I BID YOU SPEAK!
NEVERMORE NEED ANY DO YOUR BIDDING!
AS I HAVE STOLEN YOUR BODY, SO SHALL I TAKE YOUR LIFE!
AND THIS SHALL BE MY VICTORY--
NEVER WILL YOU KNOW-- THE ONE WHO HAS DESTROYED YOU!
9

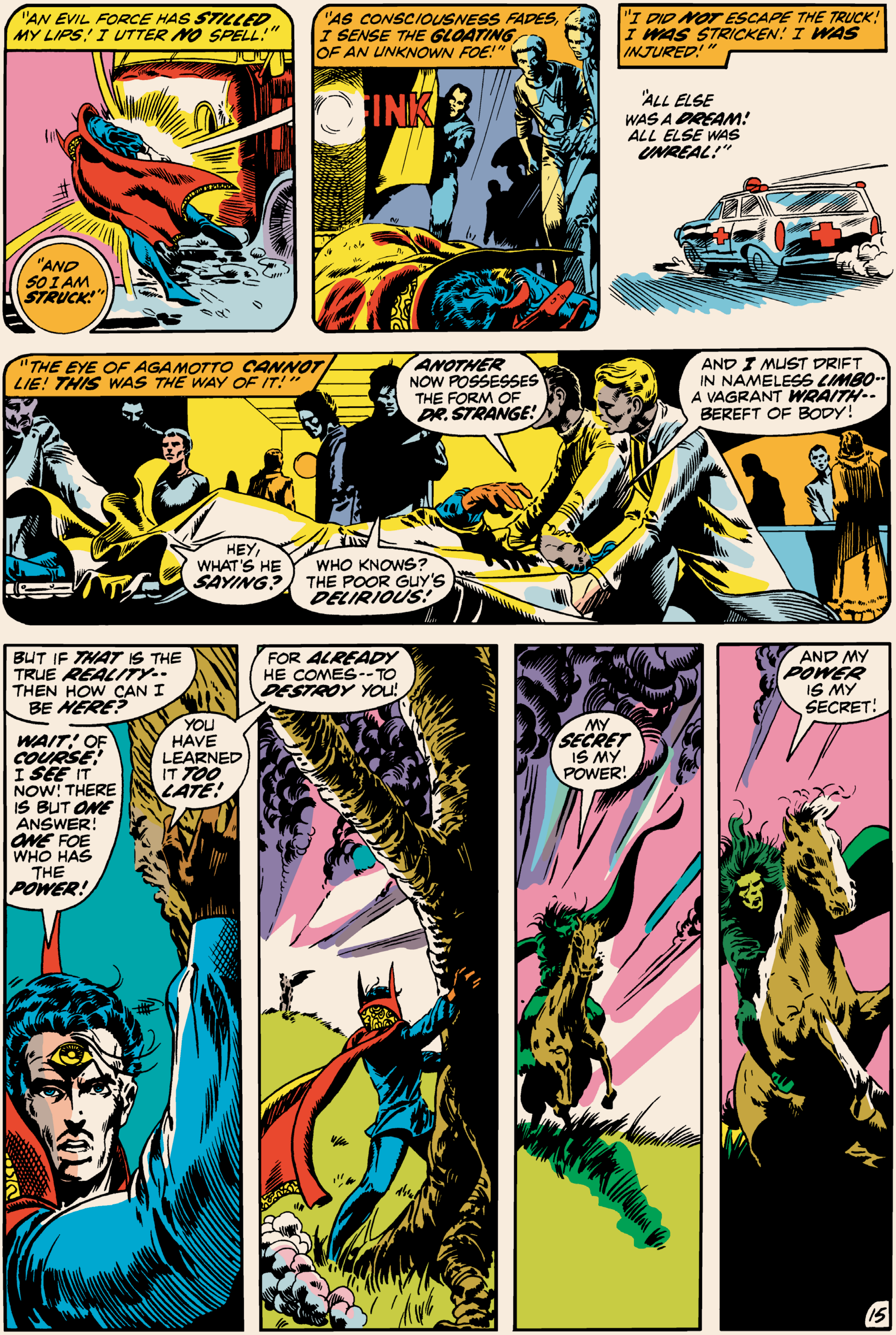

NOT *YET* AM I DESTROYED!
NOT WHILE I *MOVE*--AND *THINK*--AND *STRIVE!*
BUT I *DARE* NOT STRIKE TOO *HARD!*
I DARE NOT *INJURE* MY OWN PHYSICAL FORM!
WHY WILL YOU NOT TELL ME WHAT YOU *SEEK?*
CAN YOU NOT *GUESS?*
ONLY THAT *KNOWLEDGE* CAN SAVE YOU!
AND IT SHALL *NEVER* BE YOURS!
WAIT! IT-- IT CANNOT *BE!*
I *TOUCH* YOU! I *FEEL* YOU! AND YET-- I AM IN MY *SPIRIT FORM!*
NO! NO! YOU COME TOO *CLOSE* TO THE TRUTH-- TOO CLOSE TO THE *ANSWER!*
THE ANSWER THAT YOU MUST *NEVER* LEARN!
STOP! COME *BACK!*
MY BODY MUST NOT BE *HURLED* TO THE GROUND BELOW!
YOU COULD NOT KNOW THE *THICKNESS* OF MY WINDOW PANES--
THE PROTECTIVE THICKNESS WHICH *SLOWED* YOUR PLUNGE-- AND *SAVED* MY MORTAL FORM!
IF YOU HAD STRUCK THE *GROUND*--
BUT WAIT!
WHAT DO I *SEE?*
WHAT *MADNESS* NOW ENGULFS US?
10

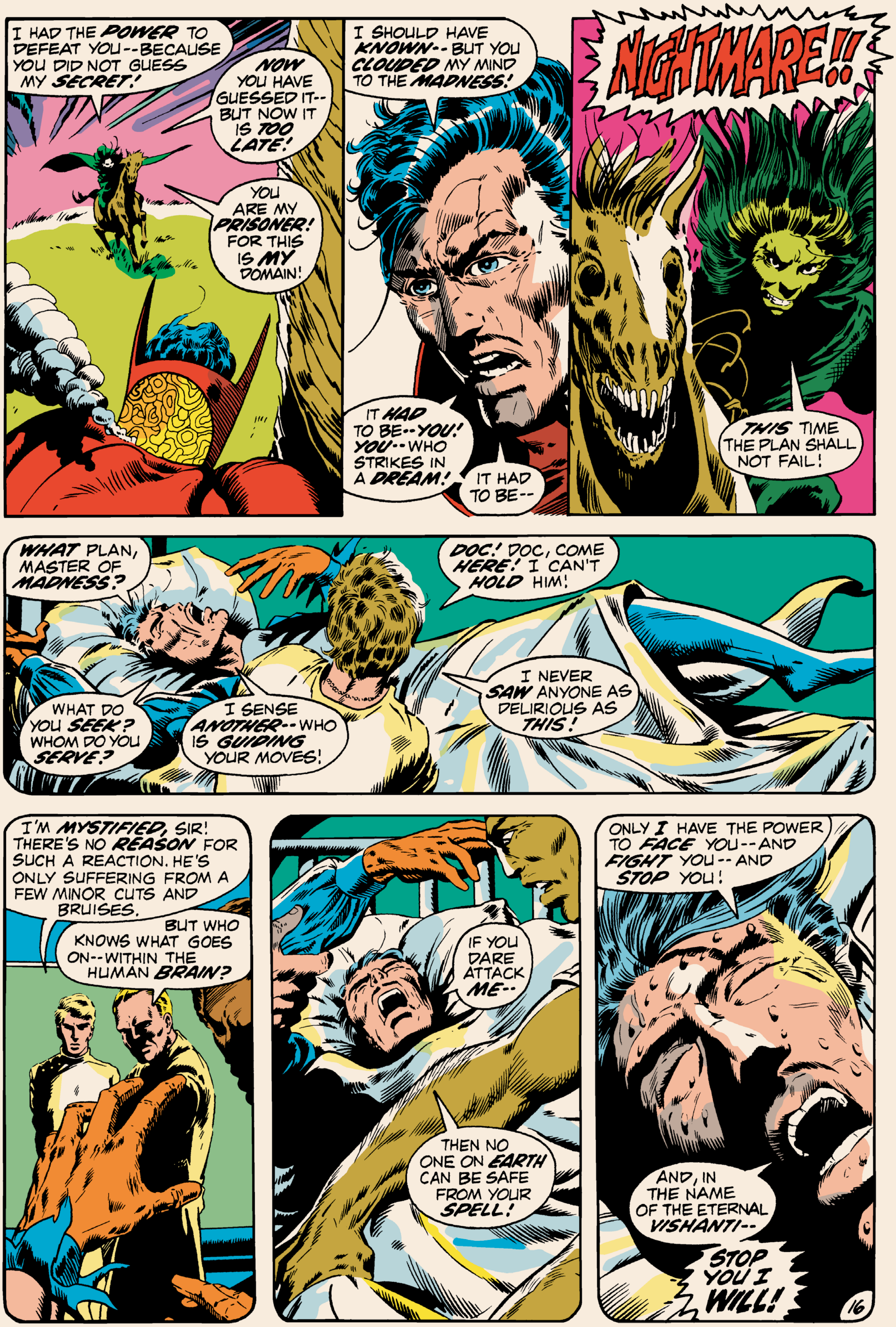

THERE IS NO GROUND! THERE IS NO EARTH!
THE WORLD OUTSIDE-- HAS VANISHED!
MY HANDS! THEY BECOME EPHEMERAL ONCE MORE!
I CAN NO LONGER HOLD MY DANGLING BODY!
MY UNKNOWN FOE HAS FLED MY FORM!
IT FALLS-- LIKE AN EMPTY, LIFELESS SHELL!
BUT I SHALL DIVE WITH GREATER SPEED--
--AND REACH IT-- AND REJOIN IT!
NOW AT LAST I'M WHOLE AGAIN--
BUT--A MAN WHO'S LOST HIS WORLD!
11

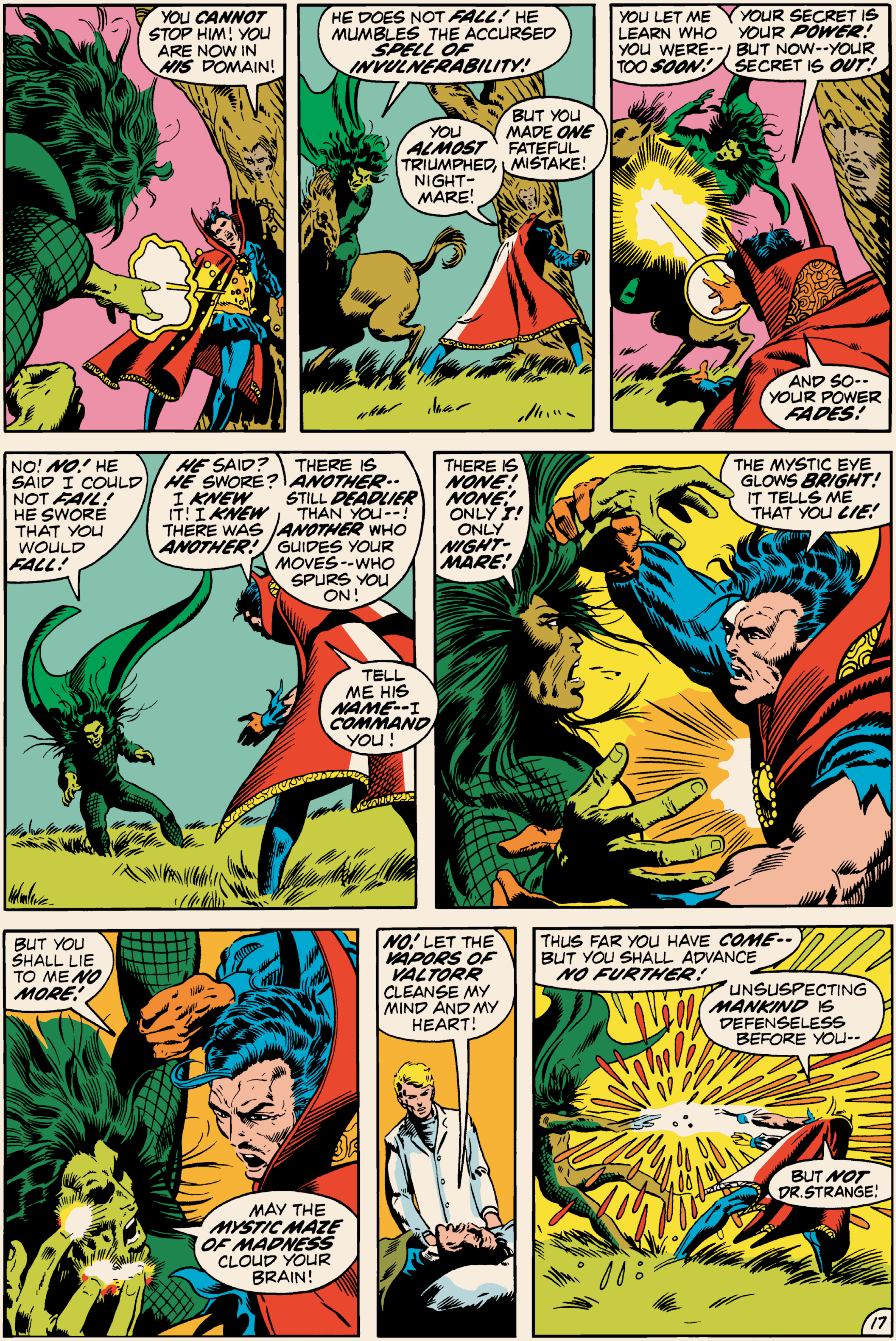

THE GROUND APPEARS ONCE MORE BENEATH MY FEET.
BUT WHAT OF THE CITY-- THE SIDEWALKS--THE PEOPLE?
MY BODY IS CUT AND BRUISED. MY LIMBS ACHE WITH PAIN.
I HAD NO TIME TO UTTER A PROTECTIVE SPELL BEFORE PLUNGING THROUGH THE WINDOW.
BUT THAT DOES NOT MATTER NOW.
I EXIST IN A WORLD WHERE ALL HAS MYSTERIOUSLY CHANGED--
--AND I MUST FIND THE ONE WHO HAS WORKED THIS EVIL MIRACLE.
IN THE WORDS OF THE ANCIENT ONE-- HIS SECRET IS HIS POWER--
AND HIS POWER IS HIS SECRET!
WHEN I LEARN THE ONE, I WILL FACE THE OTHER.
BUT WHAT IS HIS DEADLY PURPOSE? HOW SHALL I FATHOM HIS MYSTICAL PLAN?
I MUST THINK OF THOSE I HAVE BATTLED BEFORE. THOSE WITH POWER ENOUGH TO--
BUT WAIT! WHAT DO I HEAR SO FAINTLY BEHIND ME?
HELP ME! YOU MUST HELP ME!
WITHIN THAT TREE-- A PLEADING VOICE!
AND, WHILE I WATCH-- A FACE APPEARS!
A FACE WHICH IS-- MY OWN!
I AM YOU-- AND YOU ARE ME!
WE EACH ARE DOOMED-- UNLESS YOU SURRENDER-- SURRENDER TO HIM!
12

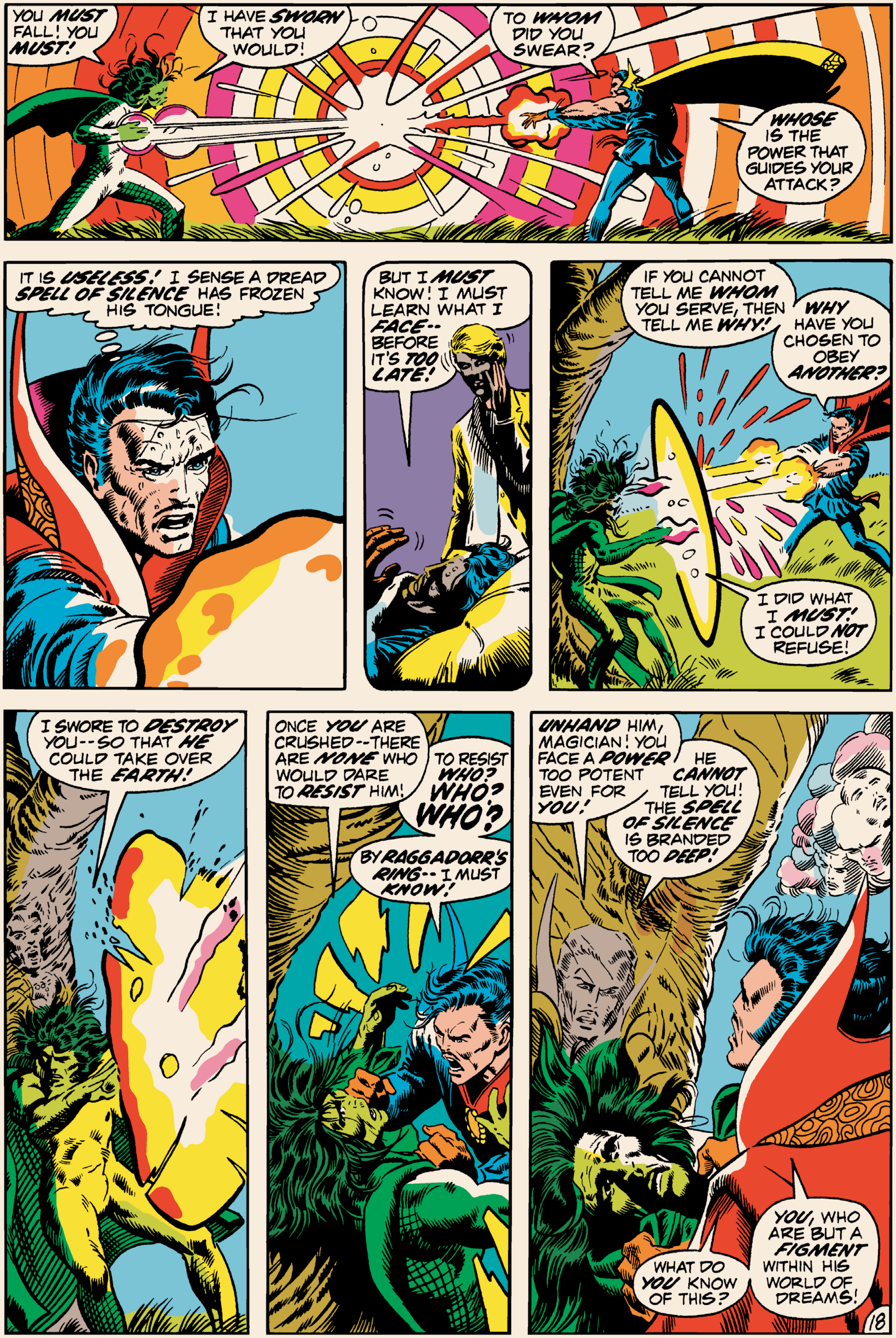

SURRENDER TO WHOM? YOU MUST ANSWER ME! I HAVE TO KNOW!
WHO HAS DONE THIS AWESOME DEED?
HIS SECRET IS HIS POWER! HIS POWER IS HIS SECRET!
DO NOT ASK-- FOR I CANNOT TELL!
THE WORDS OF THE ANCIENT ONE!
ALL THAT HAS BEFALLEN TODAY-- IS SHEEREST MADNESS!
BUT THIS-- THIS IS MADDEST OF ALL!
WHO CAN TRULY KNOW WHAT IS SANE AND WHAT IS MAD?
I WHO LIVE-- AM DEAD! YOU WHO DIE-- STILL LIVE!
BUT WE CAN NEVER SLEEP-- NEVER REST-- TILL YOU SAY YOU SURRENDER!
WE CAN NEVER KNOW PEACE-- TILL YOU HAVE SWORN TO YIELD!
WE? DO NOT SPEAK OF WE TO DR. STRANGE!
I AM NO PART OF ONE WHO WOULD SURRENDER!
LET THE MADNESS RAGE ON! I FIGHT TILL I FALL!
SUDDENLY, THE SOUNDS, THE CRIES COME FROM EVERYWHERE!
NO!
MY FACE! IT'S WHEREVER I LOOK!
AND WHEREVER I TURN--IT WEEPS-- IN DESPERATE AGONY!
IS THE FIGHT ALREADY LOST? AM I ALREADY MAD?
13

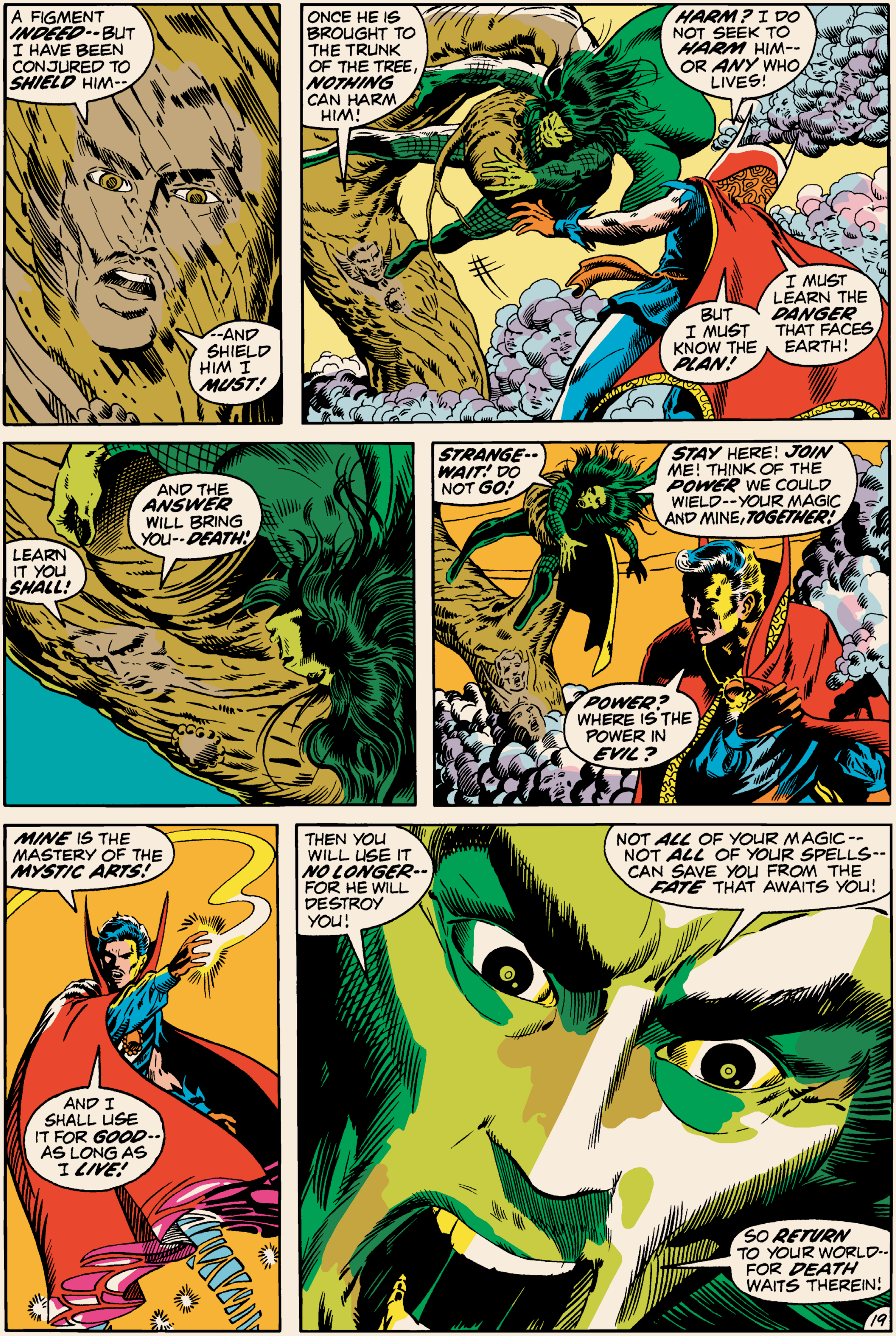

SURRENDER! FOR YOU ARE MAD!
YOU ARE MAD!
BY ALL THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH-- I SHALL NOT BREAK!
SURRENDER! FOR YOU ARE MAD!
SURRENDER! FOR YOU ARE MAD!
YOU ARE MAD!
SURRENDER! FOR YOU ARE MAD!
YOU ARE MAD!
SURRENDER! FOR YOU ARE MAD!
I AM MENACED BY MAGIC--AS SINISTER AS ANY I HAVE EVER KNOWN!
BUT, WHAT MAGIC CAN CAUSE--IT CAN LIKEWISE UNDO!
I SUMMON FORTH THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO!
NOW, LET MY AMULET OPEN!
DEVIL OR DEMON-- PREPARE!
NO! NO! WHAT WILL YOU DO?
I SHALL BRING FORTH THE TRUTH!
NO SECRET CAN HIDE FROM THE ALL-SEEING EYE!
NOW WE GO BACK-- TO WHERE IT BEGAN!
"I SEE MYSELF AS I WAS, WALKING--SENSING IMPENDING DISASTER--"
"AND THERE IS THE TRUCK-- JUST AS I REMEMBER IT."
"BUT WAIT! SOMETHING HAS CHANGED!"
"THE TRUCK RACES FAST-- TOO FAST!"
14

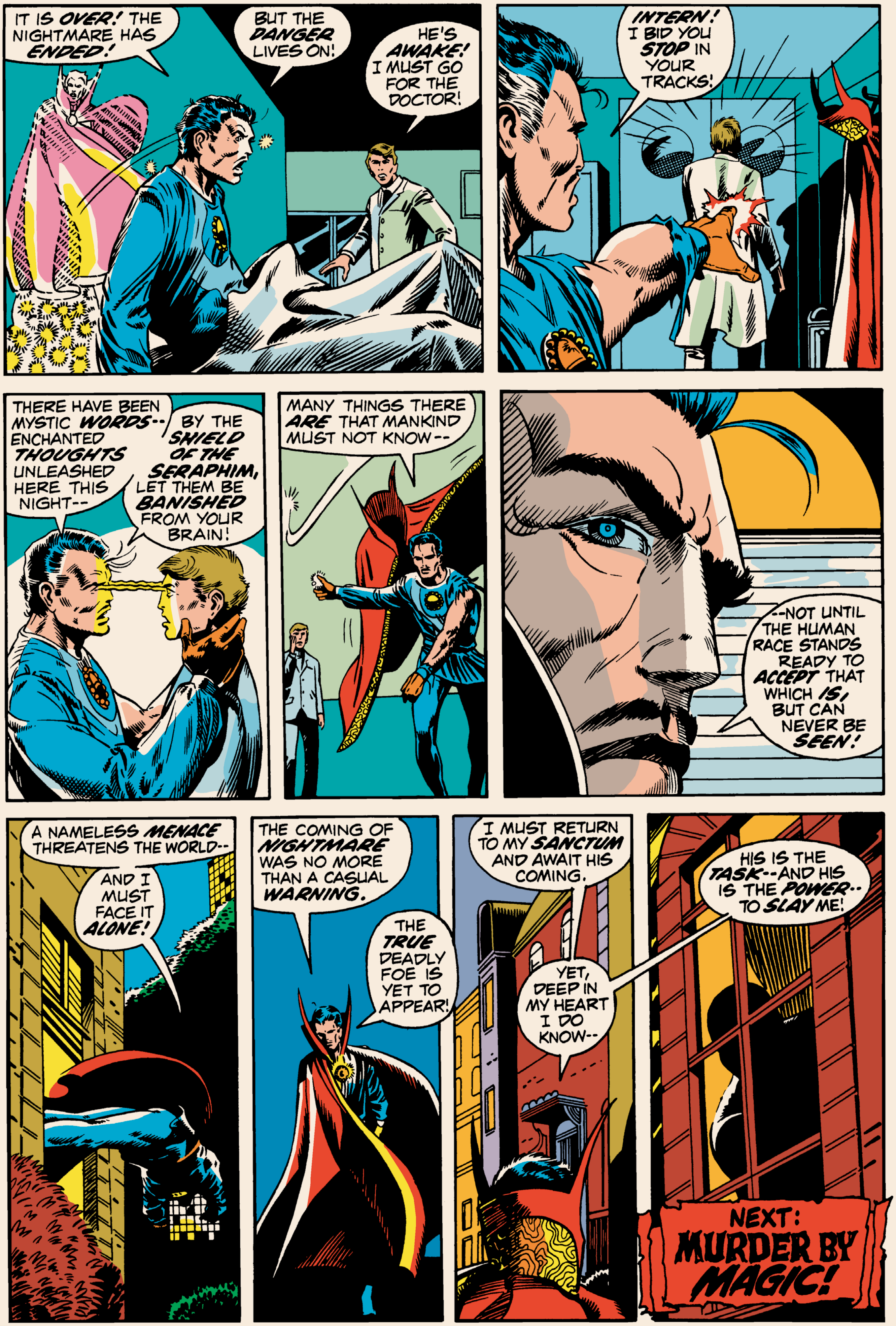

"AN EVIL FORCE HAS STILLED MY LIPS! I UTTER NO SPELL!"
"AND SO I AM STRUCK!"
"AS CONSCIOUSNESS FADES, I SENSE THE GLOATING OF AN UNKNOWN FOE!"
FINK
"I DID NOT ESCAPE THE TRUCK! I WAS STRICKEN! I WAS INJURED!"
"ALL ELSE WAS A DREAM! ALL ELSE WAS UNREAL!"
"THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO CANNOT LIE! THIS WAS THE WAY OF IT!"
ANOTHER NOW POSSESSES THE FORM OF DR. STRANGE!
AND I MUST DRIFT IN NAMELESS LIMBO-- A VAGRANT WRAITH-- BEREFT OF BODY!
HEY, WHAT'S HE SAYING?
WHO KNOWS? THE POOR GUY'S DELIRIOUS!
BUT IF THAT IS THE TRUE REALITY-- THEN HOW CAN I BE HERE?
WAIT! OF COURSE! I SEE IT NOW! THERE IS BUT ONE ANSWER! ONE FOE WHO HAS THE POWER!
YOU HAVE LEARNED IT TOO LATE!
FOR ALREADY HE COMES--TO DESTROY YOU!
MY SECRET IS MY POWER!
AND MY POWER IS MY SECRET!
15


I HAD THE POWER TO DEFEAT YOU--BECAUSE YOU DID NOT GUESS MY SECRET!
NOW YOU HAVE GUESSED IT--BUT NOW IT IS TOO LATE!
YOU ARE MY PRISONER! FOR THIS IS MY DOMAIN!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN--BUT YOU CLOUDED MY MIND TO THE MADNESS!
IT HAD TO BE--YOU! YOU--WHO STRIKES IN A DREAM!
IT HAD TO BE--
NIGHTMARE!!
THIS TIME THE PLAN SHALL NOT FAIL!
WHAT PLAN, MASTER OF MADNESS?
DOC! DOC, COME HERE! I CAN'T HOLD HIM!
WHAT DO YOU SEEK? WHOM DO YOU SERVE?
I SENSE ANOTHER--WHO IS GUIDING YOUR MOVES!
I NEVER SAW ANYONE AS DELIRIOUS AS THIS!
I'M MYSTIFIED, SIR! THERE'S NO REASON FOR SUCH A REACTION. HE'S ONLY SUFFERING FROM A FEW MINOR CUTS AND BRUISES.
BUT WHO KNOWS WHAT GOES ON--WITHIN THE HUMAN BRAIN?
IF YOU DARE ATTACK ME--
THEN NO ONE ON EARTH CAN BE SAFE FROM YOUR SPELL!
ONLY I HAVE THE POWER TO FACE YOU--AND FIGHT YOU--AND STOP YOU!
AND, IN THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI--
STOP YOU I WILL!
16


YOU *CANNOT* STOP HIM! YOU ARE NOW IN *HIS* DOMAIN!
HE DOES NOT *FALL!* HE MUMBLES THE ACCURSED *SPELL OF INVULNERABILITY!*
YOU *ALMOST* TRIUMPHED, NIGHT-MARE!
BUT YOU MADE *ONE* FATEFUL MISTAKE!
YOU LET ME LEARN WHO YOU WERE--TOO *SOON!*
YOUR SECRET IS YOUR *POWER!* BUT NOW--YOUR SECRET IS *OUT!*
AND SO--YOUR POWER *FADES!*
NO! *NO!* HE SAID I COULD NOT *FAIL!* HE SWORE THAT YOU WOULD *FALL!*
HE SAID? *HE* SWORE? I *KNEW* IT! I *KNEW* THERE WAS *ANOTHER!*
THERE IS *ANOTHER*--STILL *DEADLIER* THAN YOU--! *ANOTHER* WHO GUIDES YOUR MOVES--WHO SPURS YOU ON!
TELL ME HIS *NAME*--I *COMMAND* YOU!
THERE IS *NONE! NONE!* ONLY *I!* ONLY *NIGHT-MARE!*
THE MYSTIC EYE GLOWS *BRIGHT!* IT TELLS ME THAT YOU *LIE!*
BUT YOU SHALL LIE TO ME *NO MORE!*
MAY THE *MYSTIC MAZE OF MADNESS* CLOUD YOUR BRAIN!
NO! LET THE *VAPORS OF VALTORR* CLEANSE MY MIND AND MY HEART!
THUS FAR YOU HAVE *COME*--BUT YOU SHALL ADVANCE *NO FURTHER!*
UNSUSPECTING *MANKIND* IS DEFENSELESS BEFORE YOU--
BUT *NOT* DR. STRANGE!
17


YOU MUST FALL! YOU MUST!
I HAVE SWORN THAT YOU WOULD!
TO WHOM DID YOU SWEAR?
WHOSE IS THE POWER THAT GUIDES YOUR ATTACK?
IT IS USELESS! I SENSE A DREAD SPELL OF SILENCE HAS FROZEN HIS TONGUE!
BUT I MUST KNOW! I MUST LEARN WHAT I FACE-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
IF YOU CANNOT TELL ME WHOM YOU SERVE, THEN TELL ME WHY!
WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO OBEY ANOTHER?
I DID WHAT I MUST! I COULD NOT REFUSE!
I SWORE TO DESTROY YOU--SO THAT HE COULD TAKE OVER THE EARTH!
ONCE YOU ARE CRUSHED--THERE ARE NONE WHO WOULD DARE TO RESIST HIM!
TO RESIST WHO? WHO? WHO?
BY RAGGADORR'S RING-- I MUST KNOW!
UNHAND HIM, MAGICIAN! YOU FACE A POWER TOO POTENT EVEN FOR YOU!
HE CANNOT TELL YOU! THE SPELL OF SILENCE IS BRANDED TOO DEEP!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF THIS?
YOU, WHO ARE BUT A FIGMENT WITHIN HIS WORLD OF DREAMS!
18


A FIGMENT INDEED--BUT I HAVE BEEN CONJURED TO SHIELD HIM--
--AND SHIELD HIM I MUST!
ONCE HE IS BROUGHT TO THE TRUNK OF THE TREE, NOTHING CAN HARM HIM!
HARM? I DO NOT SEEK TO HARM HIM--OR ANY WHO LIVES!
BUT I MUST KNOW THE PLAN!
I MUST LEARN THE DANGER THAT FACES EARTH!
LEARN IT YOU SHALL!
AND THE ANSWER WILL BRING YOU--DEATH!
STRANGE--WAIT! DO NOT GO!
STAY HERE! JOIN ME! THINK OF THE POWER WE COULD WIELD--YOUR MAGIC AND MINE, TOGETHER!
POWER? WHERE IS THE POWER IN EVIL?
MINE IS THE MASTERY OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!
AND I SHALL USE IT FOR GOOD--AS LONG AS I LIVE!
THEN YOU WILL USE IT NO LONGER--FOR HE WILL DESTROY YOU!
NOT ALL OF YOUR MAGIC--NOT ALL OF YOUR SPELLS--CAN SAVE YOU FROM THE FATE THAT AWAITS YOU!
SO RETURN TO YOUR WORLD--FOR DEATH WAITS THEREIN!
19


IT IS OVER! THE NIGHTMARE HAS ENDED!
BUT THE DANGER LIVES ON!
HE'S AWAKE! I MUST GO FOR THE DOCTOR!
INTERN! I BID YOU STOP IN YOUR TRACKS!
THERE HAVE BEEN MYSTIC WORDS-- ENCHANTED THOUGHTS UNLEASHED HERE THIS NIGHT--
BY THE SHIELD OF THE SERAPHIM, LET THEM BE BANISHED FROM YOUR BRAIN!
MANY THINGS THERE ARE THAT MANKIND MUST NOT KNOW--
--NOT UNTIL THE HUMAN RACE STANDS READY TO ACCEPT THAT WHICH IS, BUT CAN NEVER BE SEEN!
A NAMELESS MENACE THREATENS THE WORLD--
AND I MUST FACE IT ALONE!
THE COMING OF NIGHTMARE WAS NO MORE THAN A CASUAL WARNING.
THE TRUE DEADLY FOE IS YET TO APPEAR!
I MUST RETURN TO MY SANCTUM AND AWAIT HIS COMING.
YET, DEEP IN MY HEART I DO KNOW--
HIS IS THE TASK--AND HIS IS THE POWER--TO SLAY ME!
NEXT: MURDER BY MAGIC!

MARVEL PREMIERE

MARVEL COMICS GROUP™

20¢ CC

4 SEPT 02142

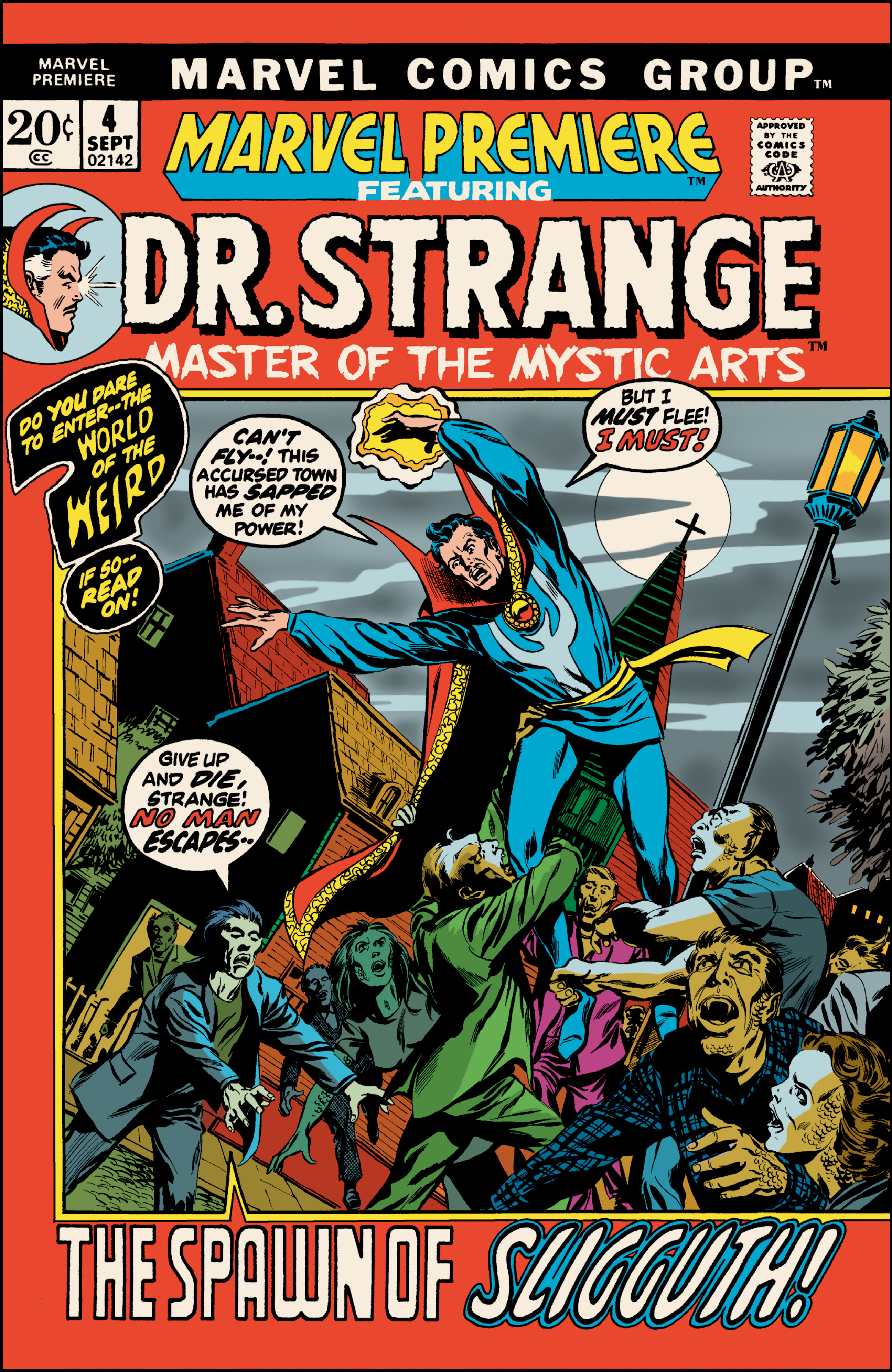
MARVEL PREMIERE™

FEATURING

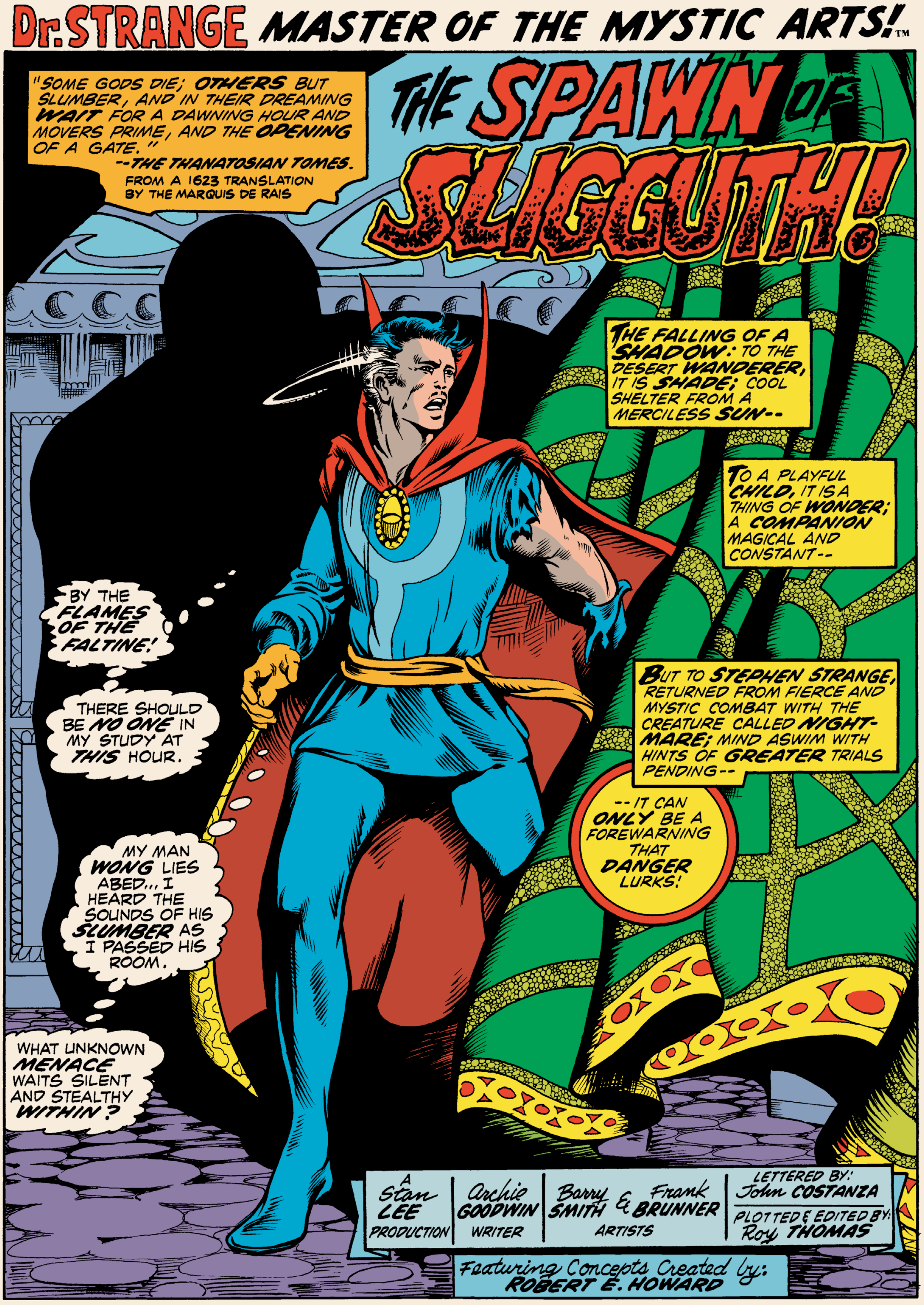
DR. STRANGE

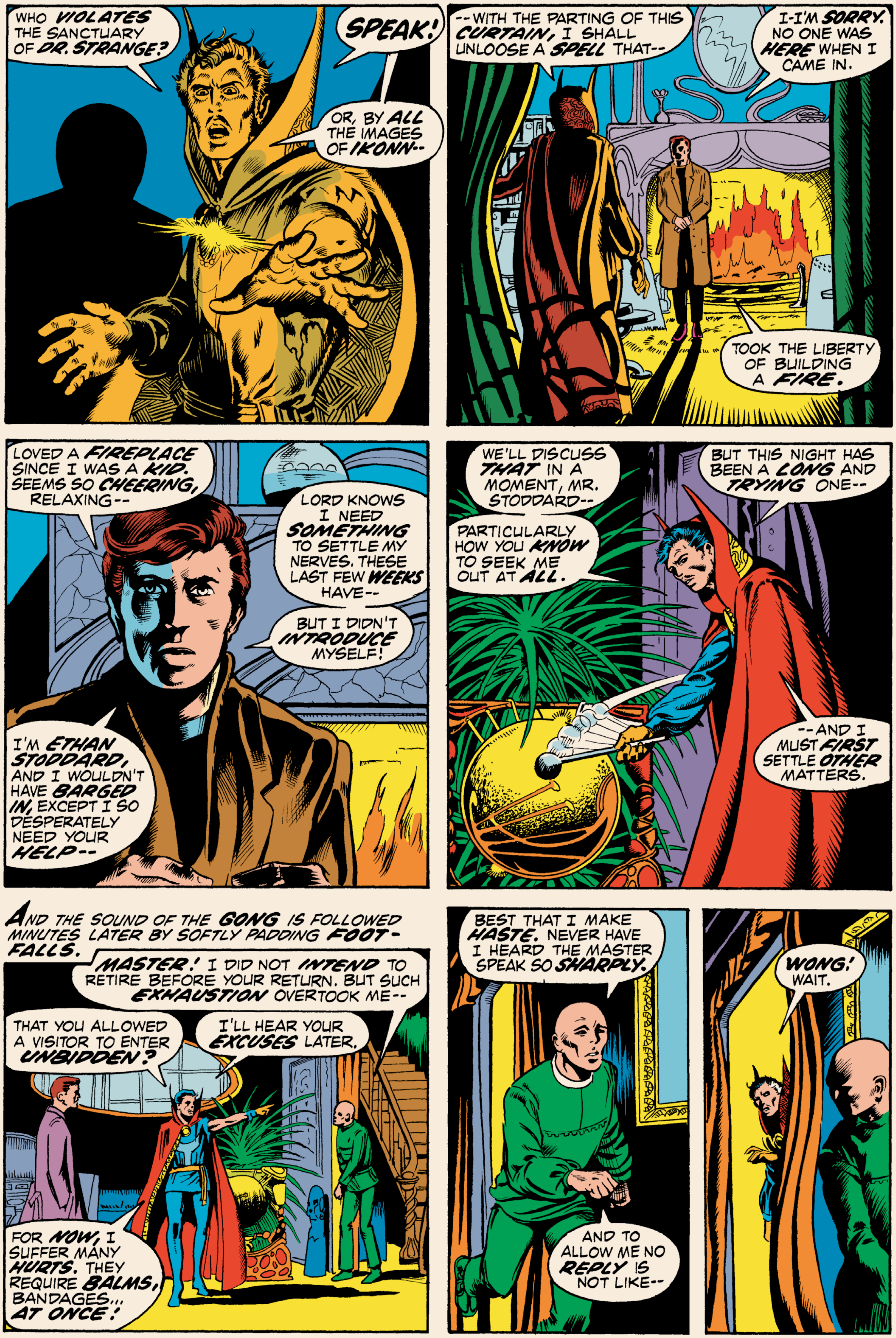
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS™

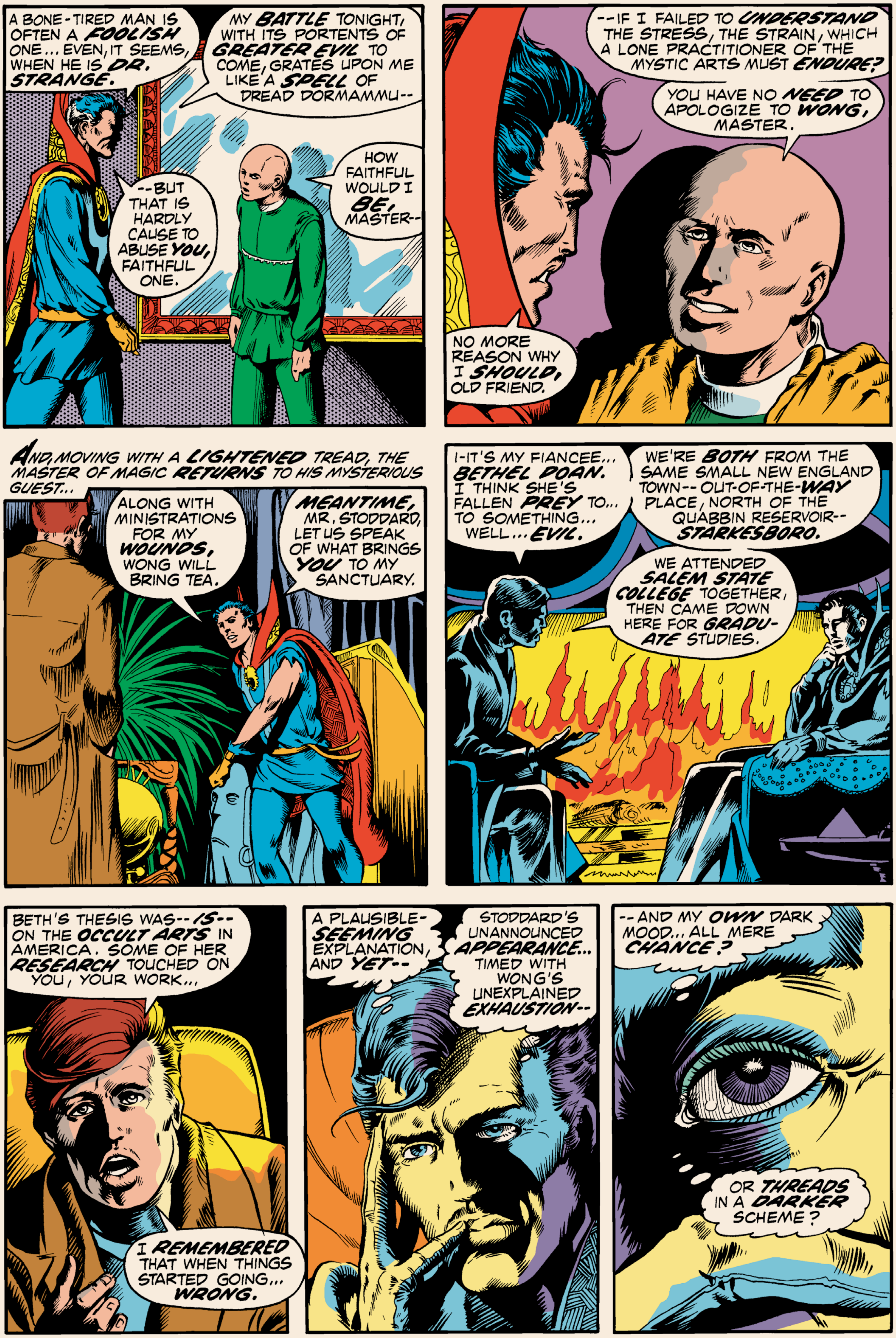
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

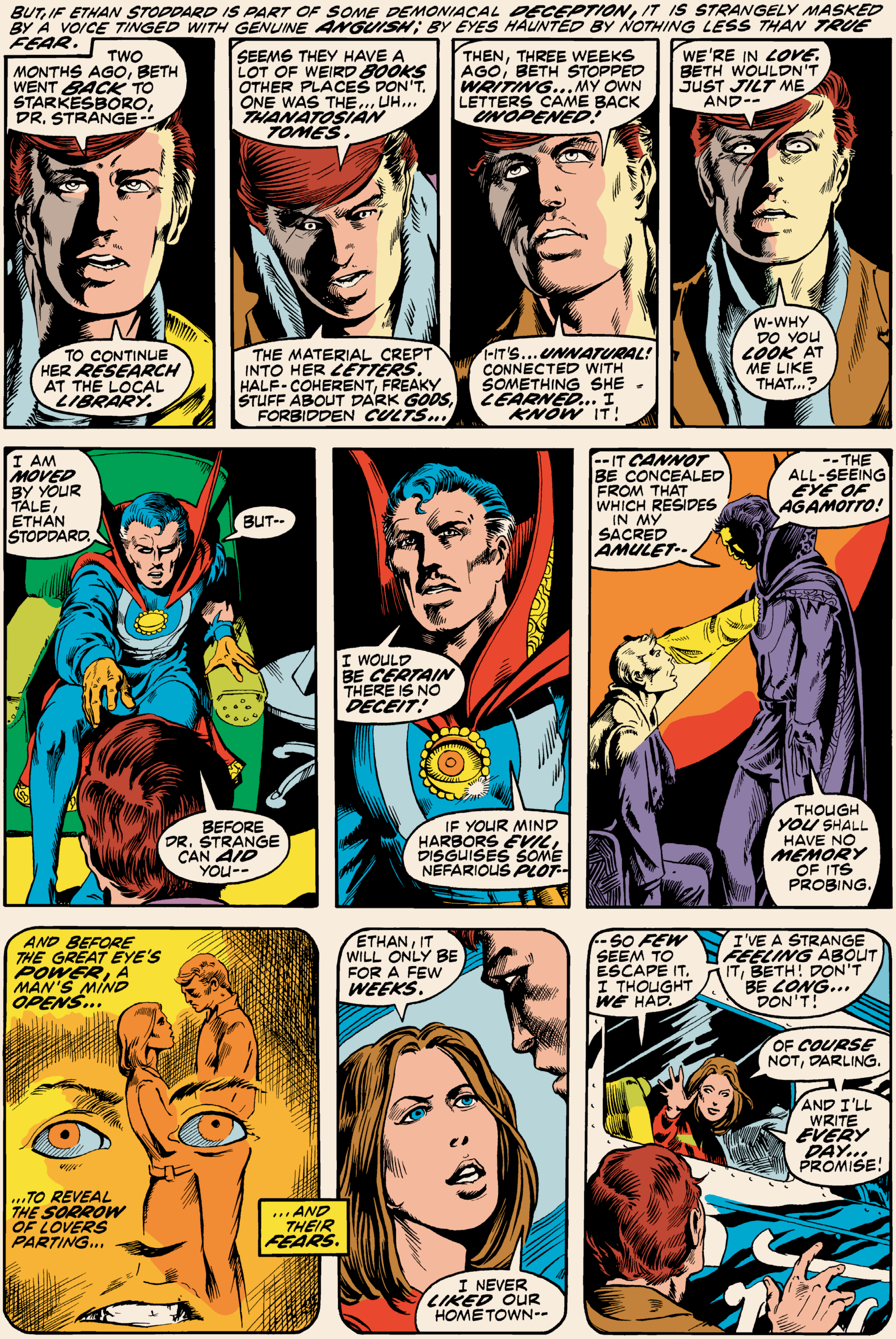

DO YOU DARE TO ENTER--THE WORLD OF THE WEIRD
IF SO--READ ON!
CAN'T FLY--! THIS ACCURSED TOWN HAS SAPPED ME OF MY POWER!
BUT I MUST FLEE! I MUST!
GIVE UP AND DIE, STRANGE! NO MAN ESCAPES--

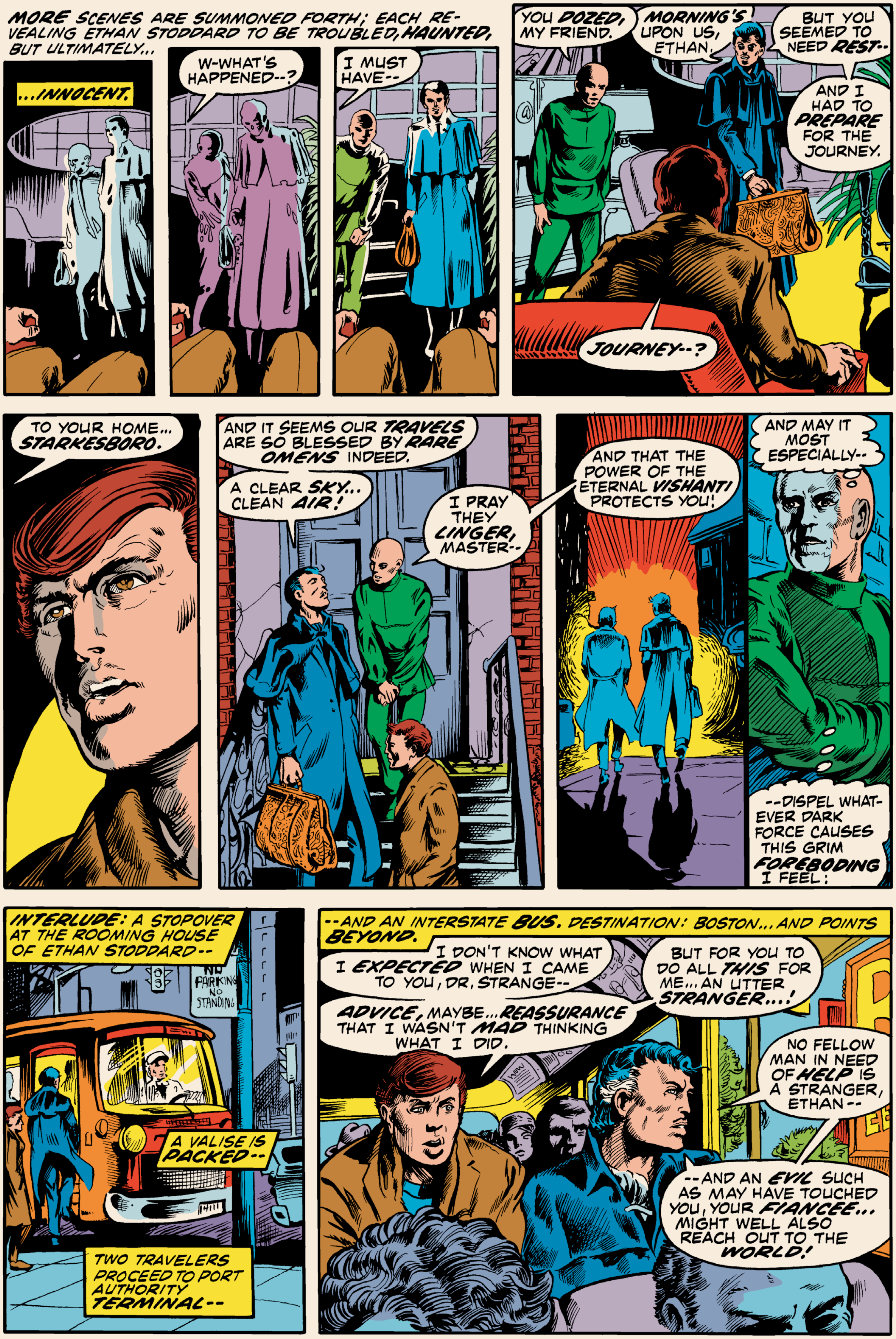
THE SPAWN OF SLIGGUTH!

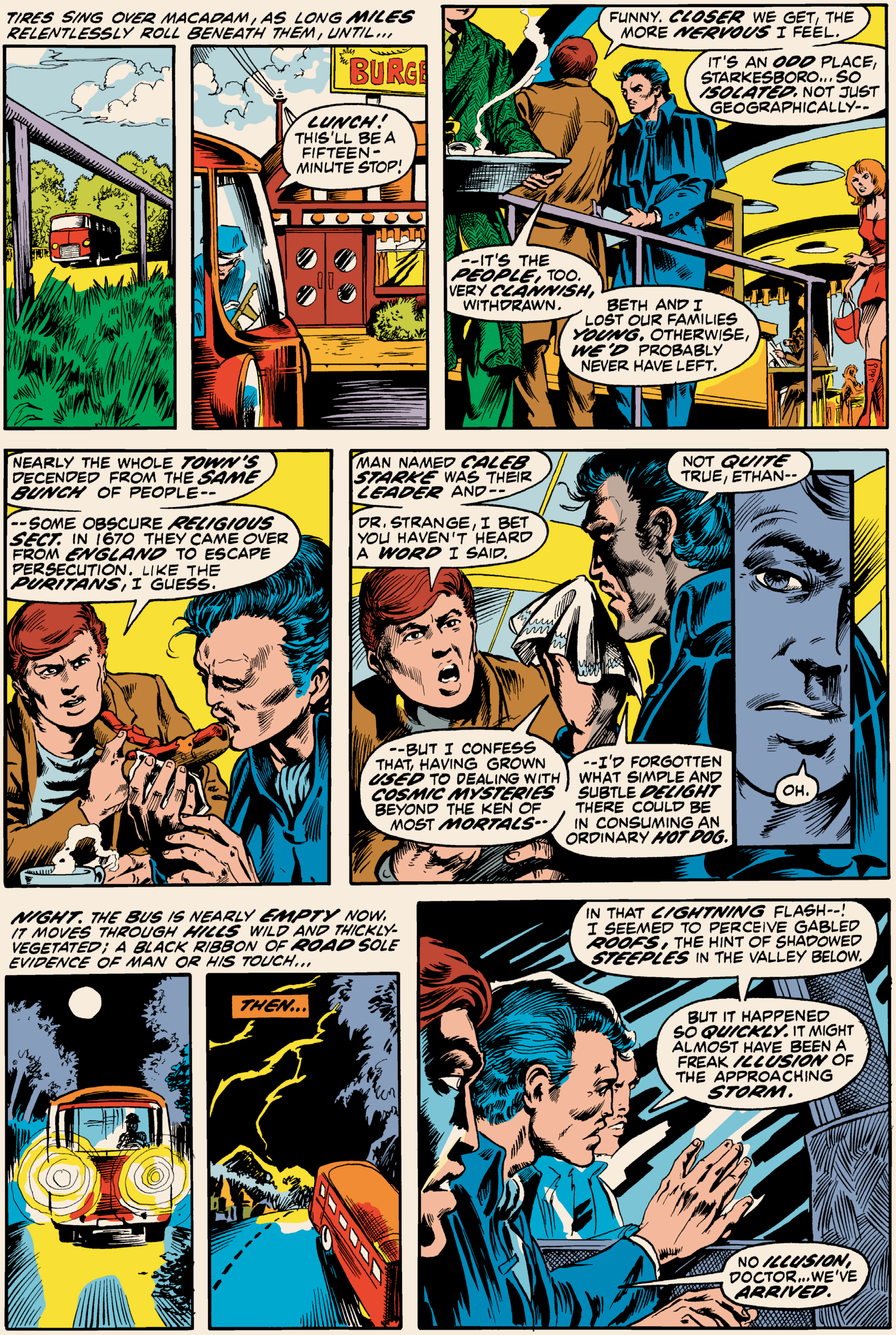

Dr. STRANGE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!™
"SOME GODS DIE; OTHERS BUT SLUMBER, AND IN THEIR DREAMING WAIT FOR A DAWNING HOUR AND MOVERS PRIME, AND THE OPENING OF A GATE."
--THE THANATOSIAN TOMES.
FROM A 1623 TRANSLATION BY THE MARQUIS DE RAIS
THE SPAWN OF SLIGGUTH!
THE FALLING OF A SHADOW: TO THE DESERT WANDERER, IT IS SHADE: COOL SHELTER FROM A MERCILESS SUN--
TO A PLAYFUL CHILD, IT IS A THING OF WONDER; A COMPANION MAGICAL AND CONSTANT--
BUT TO STEPHEN STRANGE, RETURNED FROM FIERCE AND MYSTIC COMBAT WITH THE CREATURE CALLED NIGHTMARE; MIND ASWIM WITH HINTS OF GREATER TRIALS PENDING--
--IT CAN ONLY BE A FOREWARNING THAT DANGER LURKS!
BY THE FLAMES OF THE FALTINE!
THERE SHOULD BE NO ONE IN MY STUDY AT THIS HOUR.
MY MAN WONG LIES ABED... I HEARD THE SOUNDS OF HIS SLUMBER AS I PASSED HIS ROOM.
WHAT UNKNOWN MENACE WAITS SILENT AND STEALTHY WITHIN?
A Stan LEE PRODUCTION
Archie GOODWIN WRITER
Barry SMITH & Frank BRUNNER ARTISTS
LETTERED BY: John COSTANZA
PLOTTED & EDITED BY: Roy THOMAS
Featuring Concepts Created by: ROBERT E. HOWARD

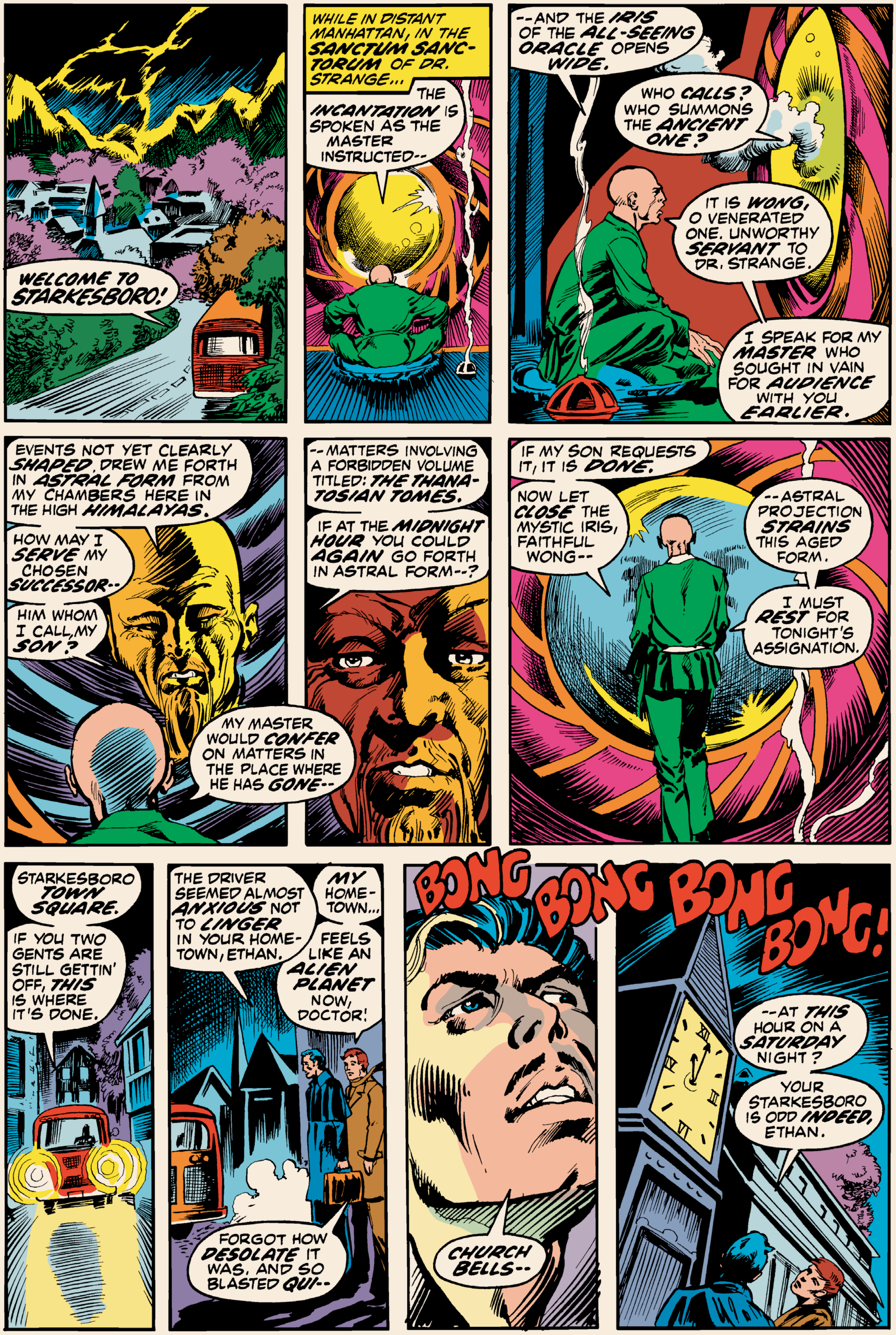

WHO VIOLATES THE SANCTUARY OF DR. STRANGE?
SPEAK!
OR, BY ALL THE IMAGES OF IKONN--
--WITH THE PARTING OF THIS CURTAIN, I SHALL UNLOOSE A SPELL THAT--
I-I'M SORRY. NO ONE WAS HERE WHEN I CAME IN.
TOOK THE LIBERTY OF BUILDING A FIRE.
LOVED A FIREPLACE SINCE I WAS A KID. SEEMS SO CHEERING, RELAXING--
LORD KNOWS I NEED SOMETHING TO SETTLE MY NERVES. THESE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE--
BUT I DIDN'T INTRODUCE MYSELF!
I'M ETHAN STODDARD, AND I WOULDN'T HAVE BARGED IN, EXCEPT I SO DESPERATELY NEED YOUR HELP--
WE'LL DISCUSS THAT IN A MOMENT, MR. STODDARD--
PARTICULARLY HOW YOU KNOW TO SEEK ME OUT AT ALL.
BUT THIS NIGHT HAS BEEN A LONG AND TRYING ONE--
--AND I MUST FIRST SETTLE OTHER MATTERS.
AND THE SOUND OF THE GONG IS FOLLOWED MINUTES LATER BY SOFTLY PADDING FOOT-FALLS.
MASTER! I DID NOT INTEND TO RETIRE BEFORE YOUR RETURN. BUT SUCH EXHAUSTION OVERTOOK ME--
THAT YOU ALLOWED A VISITOR TO ENTER UNBIDDEN?
I'LL HEAR YOUR EXCUSES LATER.
FOR NOW, I SUFFER MANY HURTS. THEY REQUIRE BALMS, BANDAGES... AT ONCE!
BEST THAT I MAKE HASTE. NEVER HAVE I HEARD THE MASTER SPEAK SO SHARPLY.
AND TO ALLOW ME NO REPLY IS NOT LIKE--
WONG! WAIT.

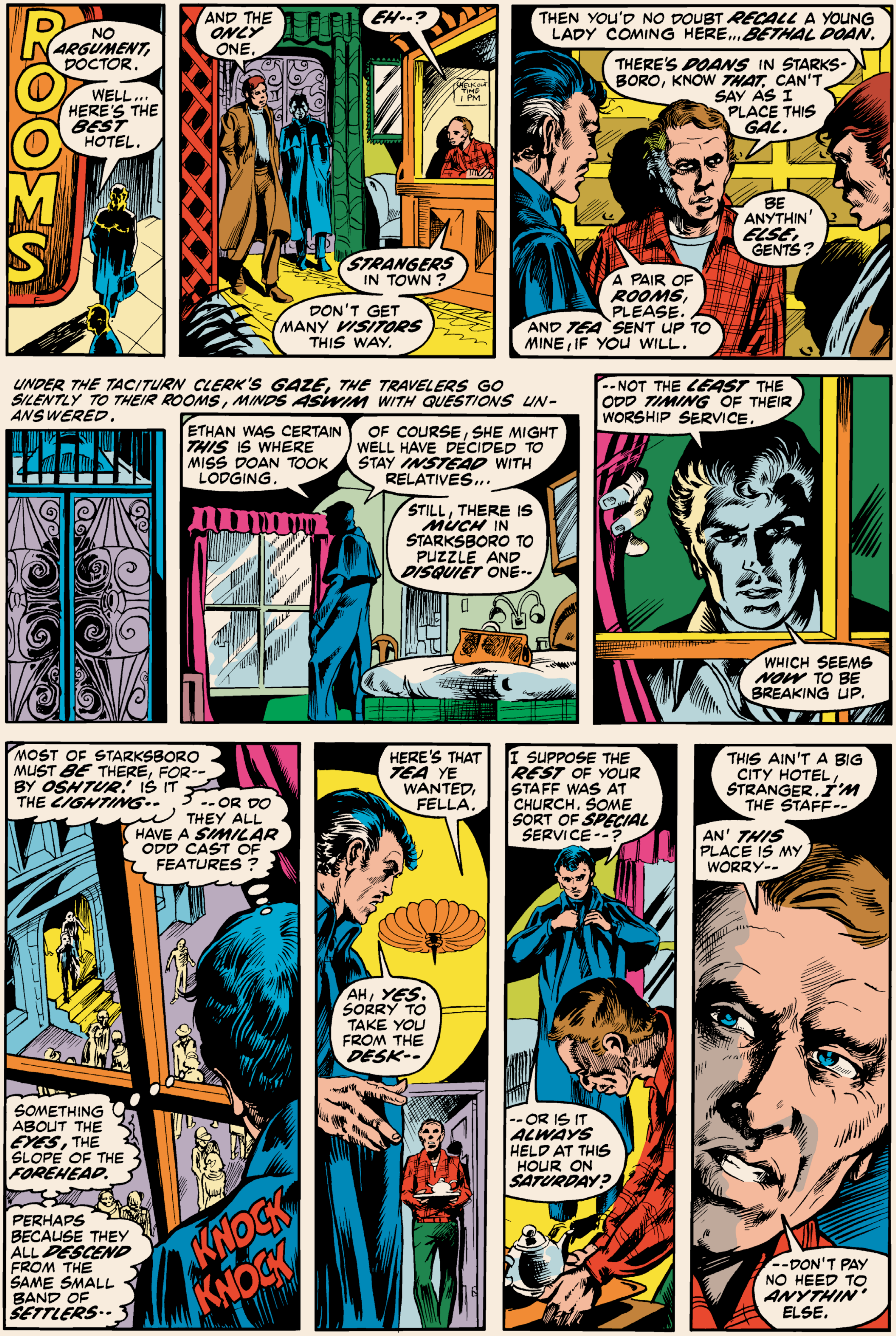

A BONE-TIRED MAN IS OFTEN A FOOLISH ONE... EVEN, IT SEEMS, WHEN HE IS DR. STRANGE.
MY BATTLE TONIGHT, WITH ITS PORTENTS OF GREATER EVIL TO COME, GRATES UPON ME LIKE A SPELL OF DREAD DORMAMMU--
--BUT THAT IS HARDLY CAUSE TO ABUSE YOU, FAITHFUL ONE.
HOW FAITHFUL WOULD I BE, MASTER--
--IF I FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THE STRESS, THE STRAIN, WHICH A LONE PRACTITIONER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS MUST ENDURE?
YOU HAVE NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO WONG, MASTER.
NO MORE REASON WHY I SHOULD, OLD FRIEND.
AND, MOVING WITH A LIGHTENED TREAD, THE MASTER OF MAGIC RETURNS TO HIS MYSTERIOUS GUEST...
ALONG WITH MINISTRATIONS FOR MY WOUNDS, WONG WILL BRING TEA.
MEANTIME, MR. STODDARD, LET US SPEAK OF WHAT BRINGS YOU TO MY SANCTUARY.
I-IT'S MY FIANCEE... BETHEL DOAN. I THINK SHE'S FALLEN PREY TO... TO SOMETHING... WELL... EVIL.
WE'RE BOTH FROM THE SAME SMALL NEW ENGLAND TOWN--OUT-OF-THE-WAY PLACE, NORTH OF THE QUABBIN RESERVOIR--STARKESBORO.
WE ATTENDED SALEM STATE COLLEGE TOGETHER, THEN CAME DOWN HERE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES.
BETH'S THESIS WAS--IS--ON THE OCCULT ARTS IN AMERICA. SOME OF HER RESEARCH TOUCHED ON YOU, YOUR WORK...
I REMEMBERED THAT WHEN THINGS STARTED GOING... WRONG.
A PLAUSIBLE-SEEMING EXPLANATION, AND YET--
STODDARD'S UNANNOUNCED APPEARANCE... TIMED WITH WONG'S UNEXPLAINED EXHAUSTION--
--AND MY OWN DARK MOOD... ALL MERE CHANCE?
OR THREADS IN A DARKER SCHEME?

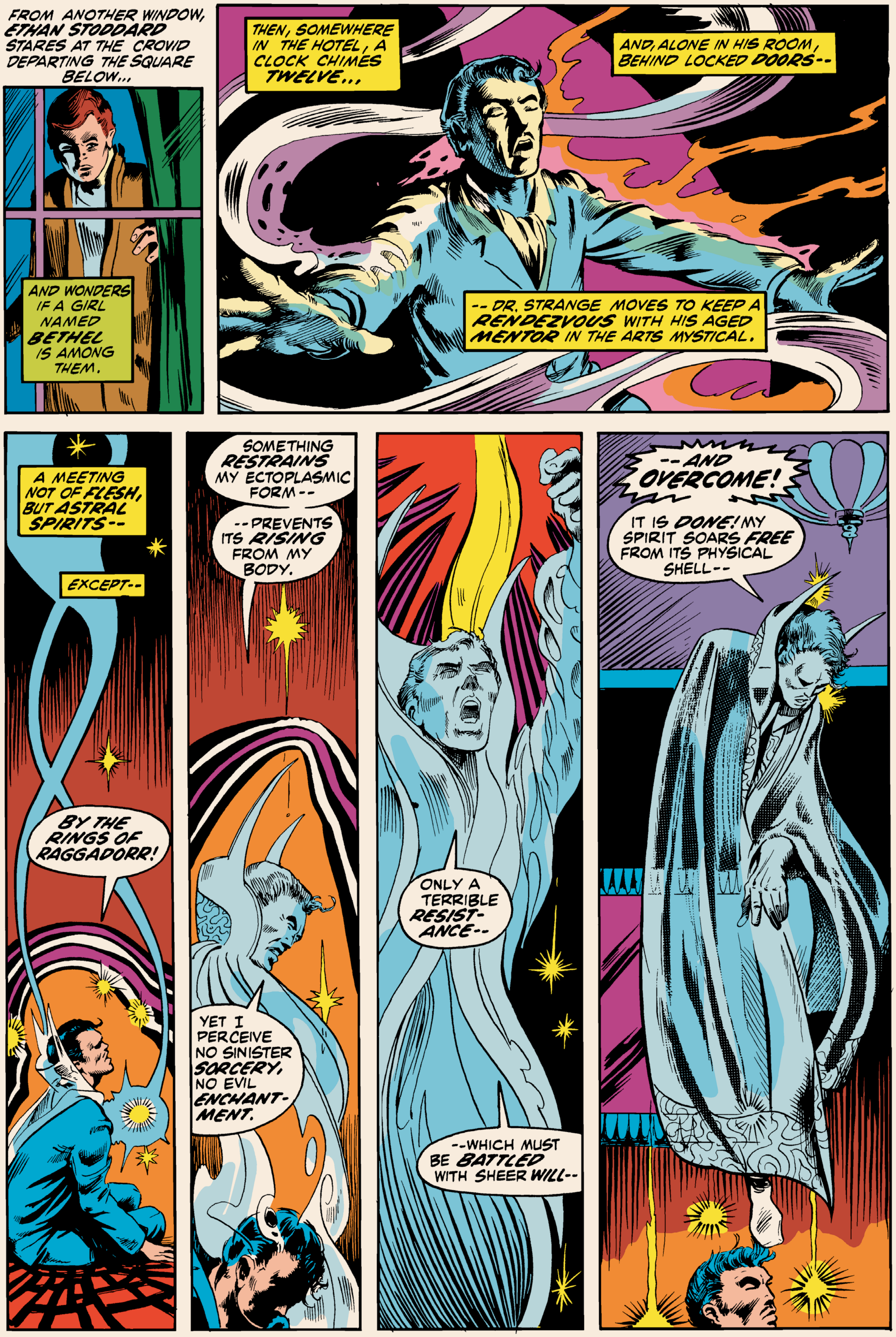

BUT, IF ETHAN STODDARD IS PART OF SOME DEMONIACAL DECEPTION, IT IS STRANGELY MASKED BY A VOICE TINGED WITH GENUINE ANGUISH; BY EYES HAUNTED BY NOTHING LESS THAN TRUE FEAR.
TWO MONTHS AGO, BETH WENT BACK TO STARKESBORO, DR. STRANGE--
TO CONTINUE HER RESEARCH AT THE LOCAL LIBRARY.
SEEMS THEY HAVE A LOT OF WEIRD BOOKS OTHER PLACES DON'T. ONE WAS THE... UH... THANATOSIAN TOMES.
THE MATERIAL CREPT INTO HER LETTERS. HALF-COHERENT, FREAKY STUFF ABOUT DARK GODS, FORBIDDEN CULTS...
THEN, THREE WEEKS AGO, BETH STOPPED WRITING... MY OWN LETTERS CAME BACK UNOPENED!
I-IT'S... UNNATURAL! CONNECTED WITH SOMETHING SHE LEARNED... I KNOW IT!
WE'RE IN LOVE. BETH WOULDN'T JUST JILT ME AND--
W-WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT...?
I AM MOVED BY YOUR TALE, ETHAN STODDARD.
BUT--
BEFORE DR. STRANGE CAN AID YOU--
I WOULD BE CERTAIN THERE IS NO DECEIT!
IF YOUR MIND HARBORS EVIL, DISGUISES SOME NEFARIOUS PLOT--
--IT CANNOT BE CONCEALED FROM THAT WHICH RESIDES IN MY SACRED AMULET--
--THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF AGAMOTTO!
THOUGH YOU SHALL HAVE NO MEMORY OF ITS PROBING.
AND BEFORE THE GREAT EYE'S POWER, A MAN'S MIND OPENS...
...TO REVEAL THE SORROW OF LOVERS PARTING...
...AND THEIR FEARS.
ETHAN, IT WILL ONLY BE FOR A FEW WEEKS.
I NEVER LIKED OUR HOMETOWN--
--SO FEW SEEM TO ESCAPE IT. I THOUGHT WE HAD.
I'VE A STRANGE FEELING ABOUT IT, BETH! DON'T BE LONG... DON'T!
OF COURSE NOT, DARLING.
AND I'LL WRITE EVERY DAY... PROMISE!

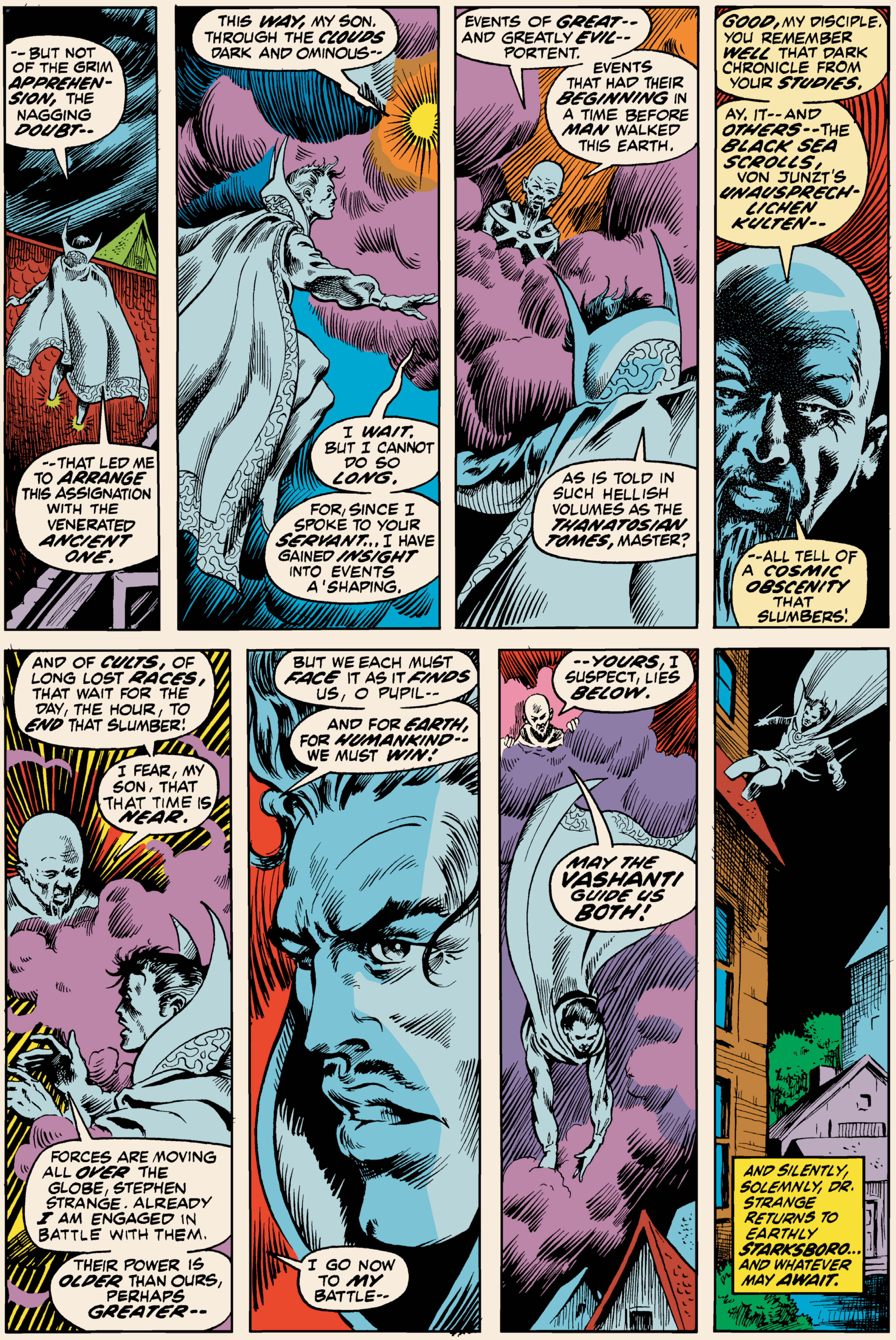

MORE SCENES ARE SUMMONED FORTH; EACH REVEALING ETHAN STODDARD TO BE TROUBLED, HAUNTED, BUT ULTIMATELY...
...INNOCENT.
W-WHAT'S HAPPENED--?
I MUST HAVE--
YOU DOZED, MY FRIEND.
MORNING'S UPON US, ETHAN.
BUT YOU SEEMED TO NEED REST--
AND I HAD TO PREPARE FOR THE JOURNEY.
JOURNEY--?
TO YOUR HOME... STARKESBORO.
AND IT SEEMS OUR TRAVELS ARE SO BLESSED BY RARE OMENS INDEED.
A CLEAR SKY... CLEAN AIR!
I PRAY THEY LINGER, MASTER--
AND THAT THE POWER OF THE ETERNAL VISHANTI PROTECTS YOU!
AND MAY IT MOST ESPECIALLY--
--DISPEL WHATEVER DARK FORCE CAUSES THIS GRIM FOREBODING I FEEL!
INTERLUDE: A STOPOVER AT THE ROOMING HOUSE OF ETHAN STODDARD--
NO PARKING NO STANDING
A VALISE IS PACKED--
TWO TRAVELERS PROCEED TO PORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL--
--AND AN INTERSTATE BUS. DESTINATION: BOSTON... AND POINTS BEYOND.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I EXPECTED WHEN I CAME TO YOU, DR. STRANGE--
ADVICE, MAYBE... REASSURANCE THAT I WASN'T MAD THINKING WHAT I DID.
BUT FOR YOU TO DO ALL THIS FOR ME... AN UTTER STRANGER...!
NO FELLOW MAN IN NEED OF HELP IS A STRANGER, ETHAN--
--AND AN EVIL SUCH AS MAY HAVE TOUCHED YOU, YOUR FIANCEE... MIGHT WELL ALSO REACH OUT TO THE WORLD!

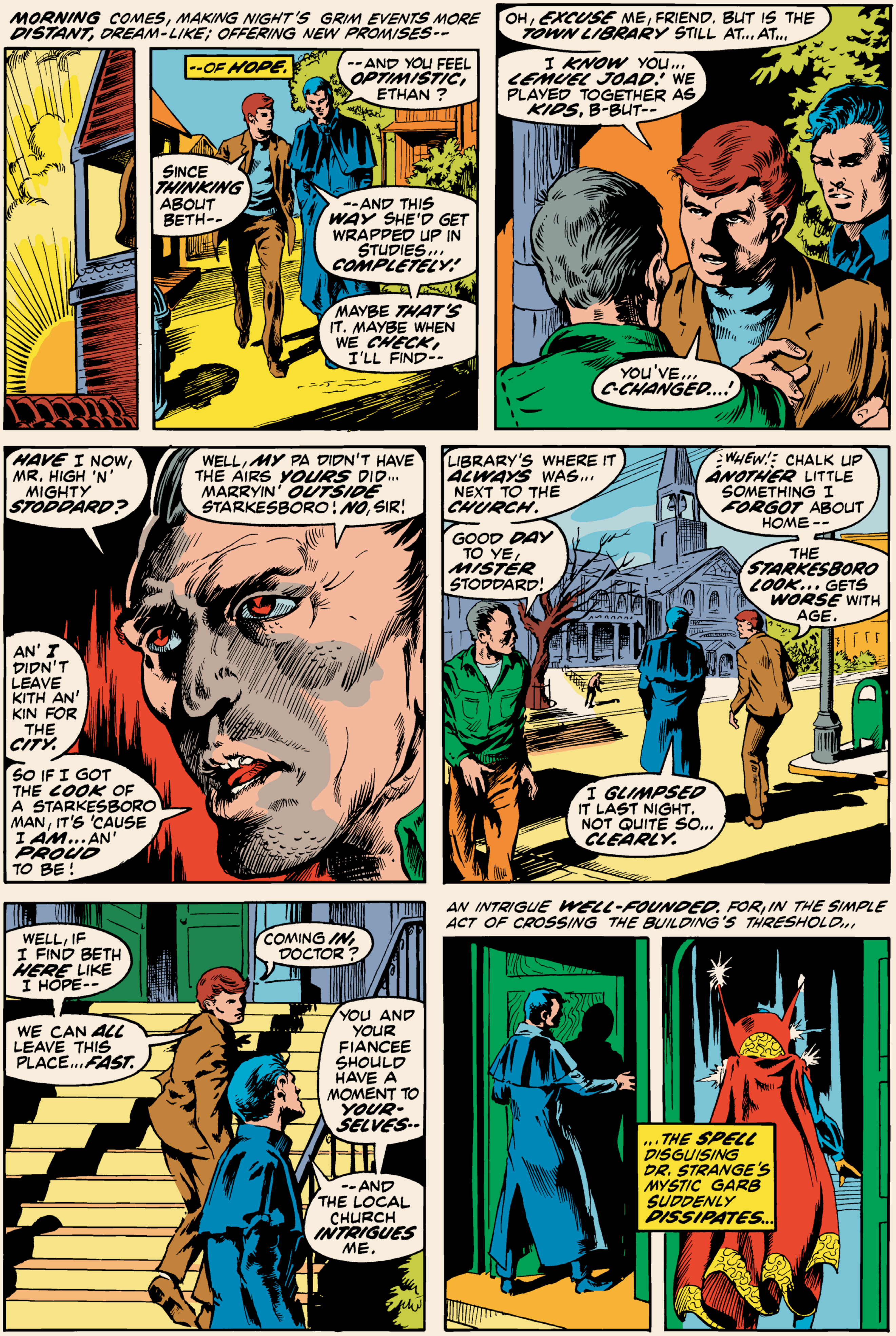

TIRES SING OVER MACADAM, AS LONG MILES RELENTLESSLY ROLL BENEATH THEM, UNTIL...
BURGE
LUNCH! THIS'LL BE A FIFTEEN-MINUTE STOP!
FUNNY. CLOSER WE GET, THE MORE NERVOUS I FEEL.
IT'S AN ODD PLACE, STARKESBORO... SO ISOLATED. NOT JUST GEOGRAPHICALLY--
--IT'S THE PEOPLE, TOO. VERY CLANNISH, WITHDRAWN.
BETH AND I LOST OUR FAMILIES YOUNG. OTHERWISE, WE'D PROBABLY NEVER HAVE LEFT.
NEARLY THE WHOLE TOWN'S DECENDED FROM THE SAME BUNCH OF PEOPLE--
--SOME OBSCURE RELIGIOUS SECT. IN 1670 THEY CAME OVER FROM ENGLAND TO ESCAPE PERSECUTION. LIKE THE PURITANS, I GUESS.
MAN NAMED CALEB STARKE WAS THEIR LEADER AND--
DR. STRANGE, I BET YOU HAVEN'T HEARD A WORD I SAID.
--BUT I CONFESS THAT, HAVING GROWN USED TO DEALING WITH COSMIC MYSTERIES BEYOND THE KEN OF MOST MORTALS--
--I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT SIMPLE AND SUBTLE DELIGHT THERE COULD BE IN CONSUMING AN ORDINARY HOT DOG.
NOT QUITE TRUE, ETHAN--
OH.
NIGHT. THE BUS IS NEARLY EMPTY NOW. IT MOVES THROUGH HILLS WILD AND THICKLY-VEGETATED; A BLACK RIBBON OF ROAD SOLE EVIDENCE OF MAN OR HIS TOUCH...
THEN...
IN THAT LIGHTNING FLASH--! I SEEMED TO PERCEIVE GABLED ROOFS, THE HINT OF SHADOWED STEEPLES IN THE VALLEY BELOW.
BUT IT HAPPENED SO QUICKLY. IT MIGHT ALMOST HAVE BEEN A FREAK ILLUSION OF THE APPROACHING STORM.
NO ILLUSION, DOCTOR... WE'VE ARRIVED.

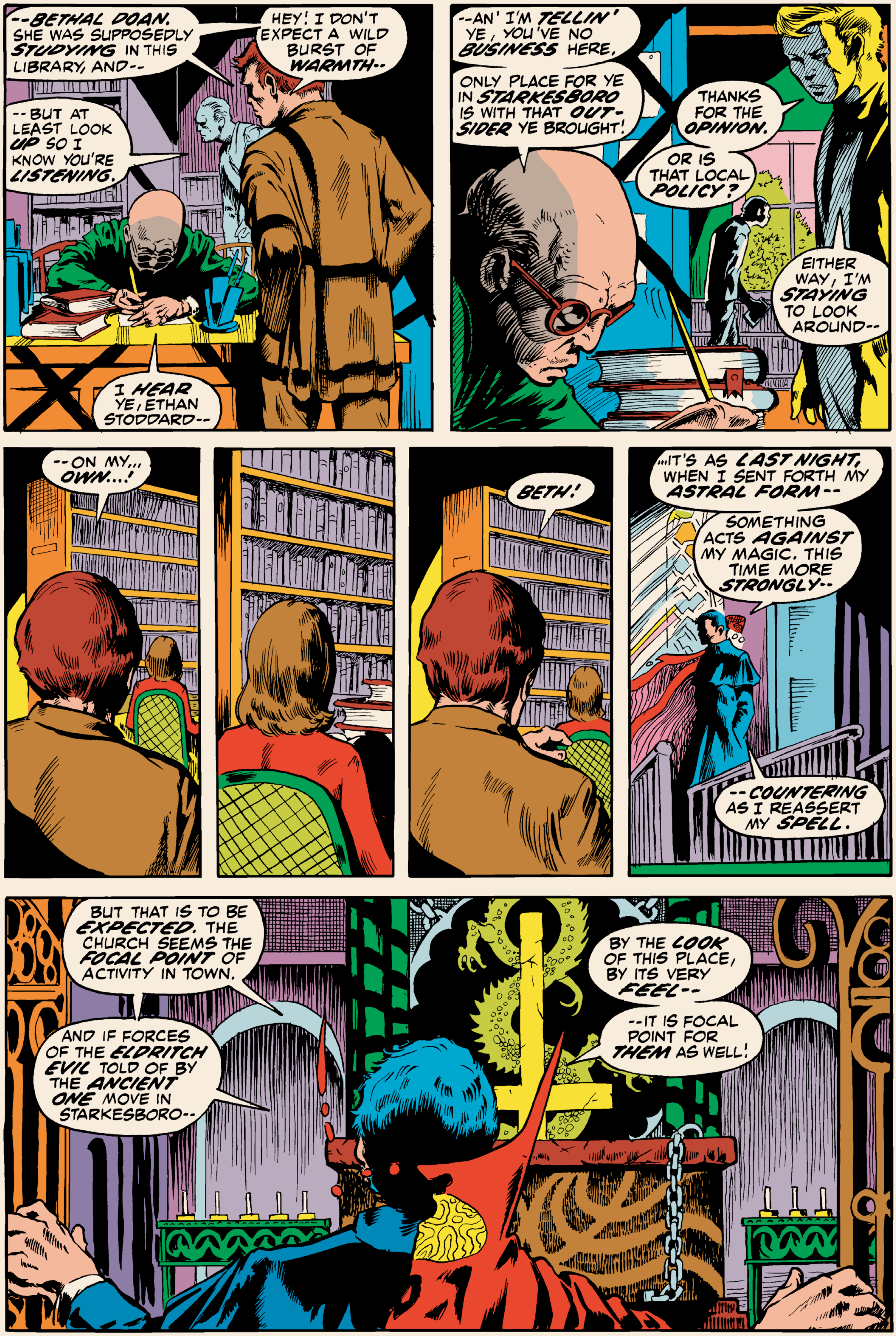

WELCOME TO STARKESBORO!
WHILE IN DISTANT MANHATTAN, IN THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM OF DR. STRANGE...
THE INCANTATION IS SPOKEN AS THE MASTER INSTRUCTED--
--AND THE IRIS OF THE ALL-SEEING ORACLE OPENS WIDE.
WHO CALLS? WHO SUMMONS THE ANCIENT ONE?
IT IS WONG, O VENERATED ONE. UNWORTHY SERVANT TO DR. STRANGE.
I SPEAK FOR MY MASTER WHO SOUGHT IN VAIN FOR AUDIENCE WITH YOU EARLIER.
EVENTS NOT YET CLEARLY SHAPED, DREW ME FORTH IN ASTRAL FORM FROM MY CHAMBERS HERE IN THE HIGH HIMALAYAS.
HOW MAY I SERVE MY CHOSEN SUCCESSOR--
HIM WHOM I CALL, MY SON?
MY MASTER WOULD CONFER ON MATTERS IN THE PLACE WHERE HE HAS GONE--
--MATTERS INVOLVING A FORBIDDEN VOLUME TITLED: THE THANATOSIAN TOMES.
IF AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR YOU COULD AGAIN GO FORTH IN ASTRAL FORM--?
IF MY SON REQUESTS IT, IT IS DONE.
NOW LET CLOSE THE MYSTIC IRIS, FAITHFUL WONG--
--ASTRAL PROJECTION STRAINS THIS AGED FORM.
I MUST REST FOR TONIGHT'S ASSIGNATION.
STARKESBORO TOWN SQUARE.
IF YOU TWO GENTS ARE STILL GETTIN' OFF, THIS IS WHERE IT'S DONE.
THE DRIVER SEEMED ALMOST ANXIOUS NOT TO LINGER IN YOUR HOMETOWN, ETHAN.
MY HOMETOWN... FEELS LIKE AN ALIEN PLANET NOW, DOCTOR!
FORGOT HOW DESOLATE IT WAS, AND SO BLASTED QUI--
BONG BONG BONG BONG!
CHURCH BELLS--
--AT THIS HOUR ON A SATURDAY NIGHT?
YOUR STARKESBORO IS ODD INDEED, ETHAN.

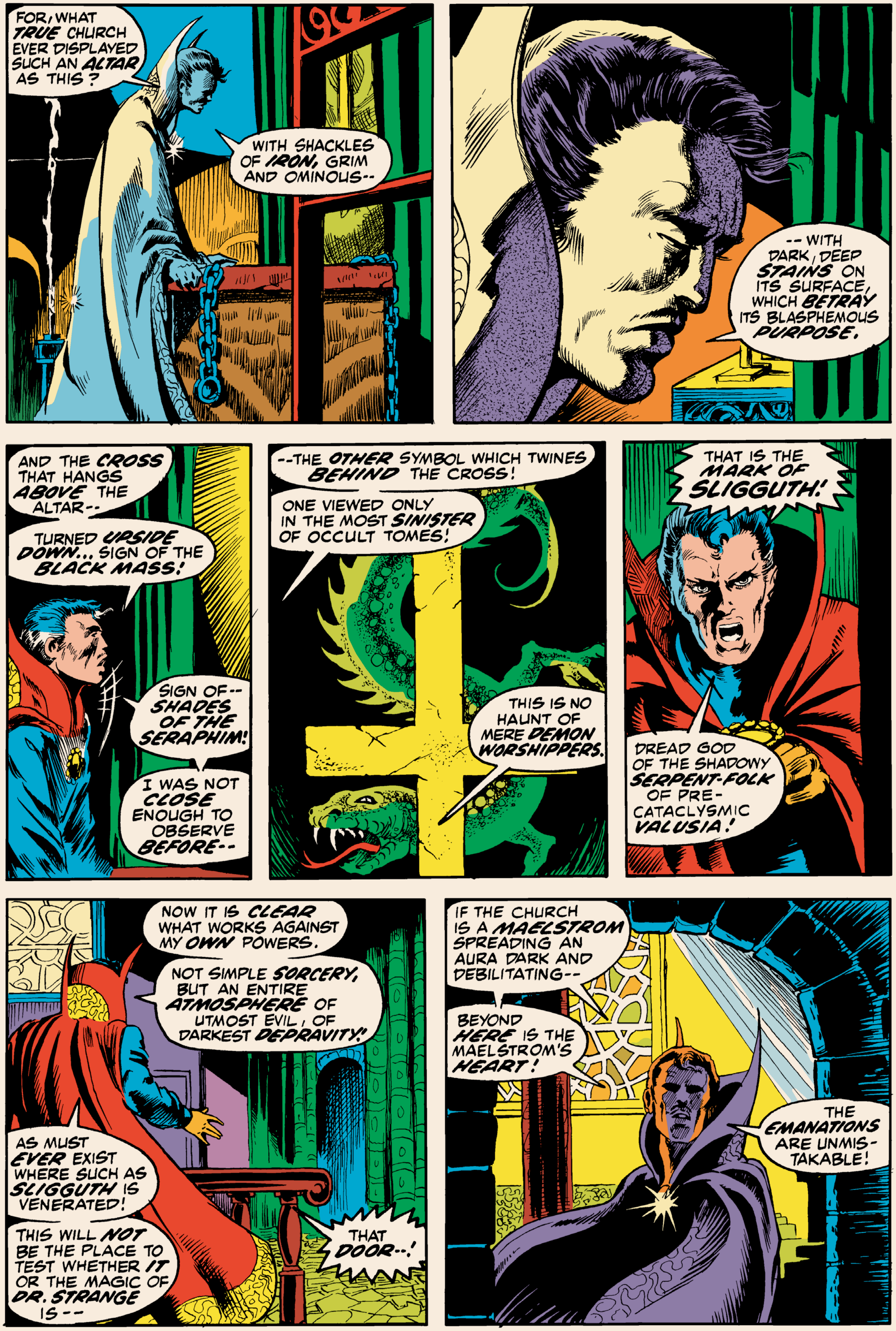

ROOMS
NO ARGUMENT, DOCTOR.
WELL... HERE'S THE BEST HOTEL.
AND THE ONLY ONE.
EH--?
CHECKOUT TIME 1 PM
STRANGERS IN TOWN?
DON'T GET MANY VISITORS THIS WAY.
THEN YOU'D NO DOUBT RECALL A YOUNG LADY COMING HERE... BETHAL DOAN.
THERE'S DOANS IN STARKSBORO, KNOW THAT. CAN'T SAY AS I PLACE THIS GAL.
BE ANYTHIN' ELSE, GENTS?
A PAIR OF ROOMS, PLEASE.
AND TEA SENT UP TO MINE, IF YOU WILL.
UNDER THE TACITURN CLERK'S GAZE, THE TRAVELERS GO SILENTLY TO THEIR ROOMS, MINDS ASWIM WITH QUESTIONS UNANSWERED.
ETHAN WAS CERTAIN THIS IS WHERE MISS DOAN TOOK LODGING.
OF COURSE, SHE MIGHT WELL HAVE DECIDED TO STAY INSTEAD WITH RELATIVES...
STILL, THERE IS MUCH IN STARKSBORO TO PUZZLE AND DISQUIET ONE--
--NOT THE LEAST THE ODD TIMING OF THEIR WORSHIP SERVICE.
WHICH SEEMS NOW TO BE BREAKING UP.
MOST OF STARKSBORO MUST BE THERE, FOR-- BY OSHTUR! IS IT THE LIGHTING--
--OR DO THEY ALL HAVE A SIMILAR ODD CAST OF FEATURES?
SOMETHING ABOUT THE EYES, THE SLOPE OF THE FOREHEAD.
PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY ALL DESCEND FROM THE SAME SMALL BAND OF SETTLERS--
KNOCK KNOCK
HERE'S THAT TEA YE WANTED, FELLA.
AH, YES. SORRY TO TAKE YOU FROM THE DESK--
I SUPPOSE THE REST OF YOUR STAFF WAS AT CHURCH. SOME SORT OF SPECIAL SERVICE--?
--OR IS IT ALWAYS HELD AT THIS HOUR ON SATURDAY?
THIS AIN'T A BIG CITY HOTEL, STRANGER. I'M THE STAFF--
AN' THIS PLACE IS MY WORRY--
--DON'T PAY NO HEED TO ANYTHIN' ELSE.

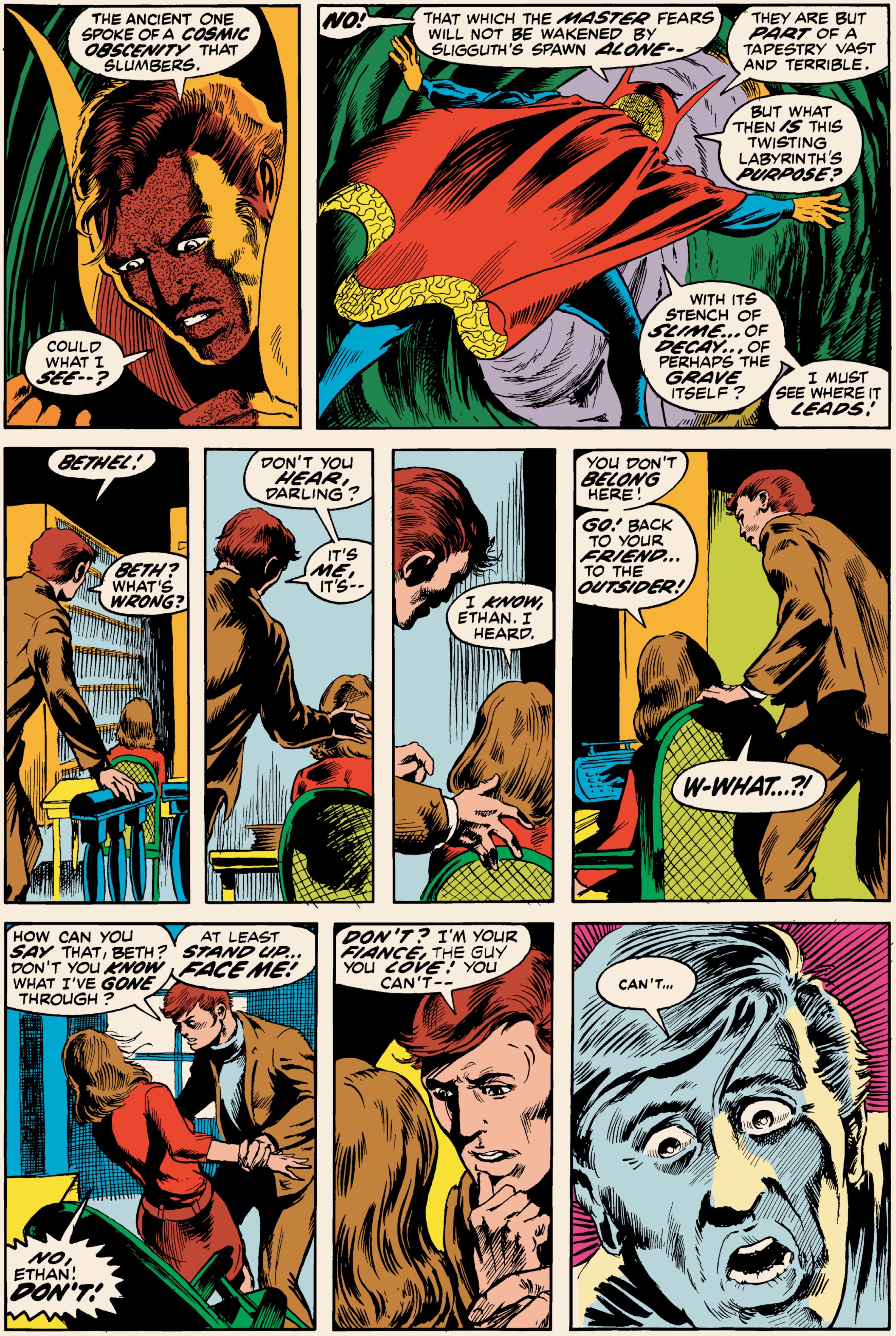

FROM ANOTHER WINDOW, ETHAN STODDARD STARES AT THE CROWD DEPARTING THE SQUARE BELOW...
AND WONDERS IF A GIRL NAMED BETHEL IS AMONG THEM.
THEN, SOMEWHERE IN THE HOTEL, A CLOCK CHIMES TWELVE...
AND, ALONE IN HIS ROOM, BEHIND LOCKED DOORS--
--DR. STRANGE MOVES TO KEEP A RENDEZVOUS WITH HIS AGED MENTOR IN THE ARTS MYSTICAL.
A MEETING NOT OF FLESH, BUT ASTRAL SPIRITS--
EXCEPT--
BY THE RINGS OF RAGGADORR!
SOMETHING RESTRAINS MY ECTOPLASMIC FORM--
--PREVENTS ITS RISING FROM MY BODY.
YET I PERCEIVE NO SINISTER SORCERY, NO EVIL ENCHANTMENT.
ONLY A TERRIBLE RESISTANCE--
--WHICH MUST BE BATTLED WITH SHEER WILL--
--AND OVERCOME!
IT IS DONE! MY SPIRIT SOARS FREE FROM ITS PHYSICAL SHELL--

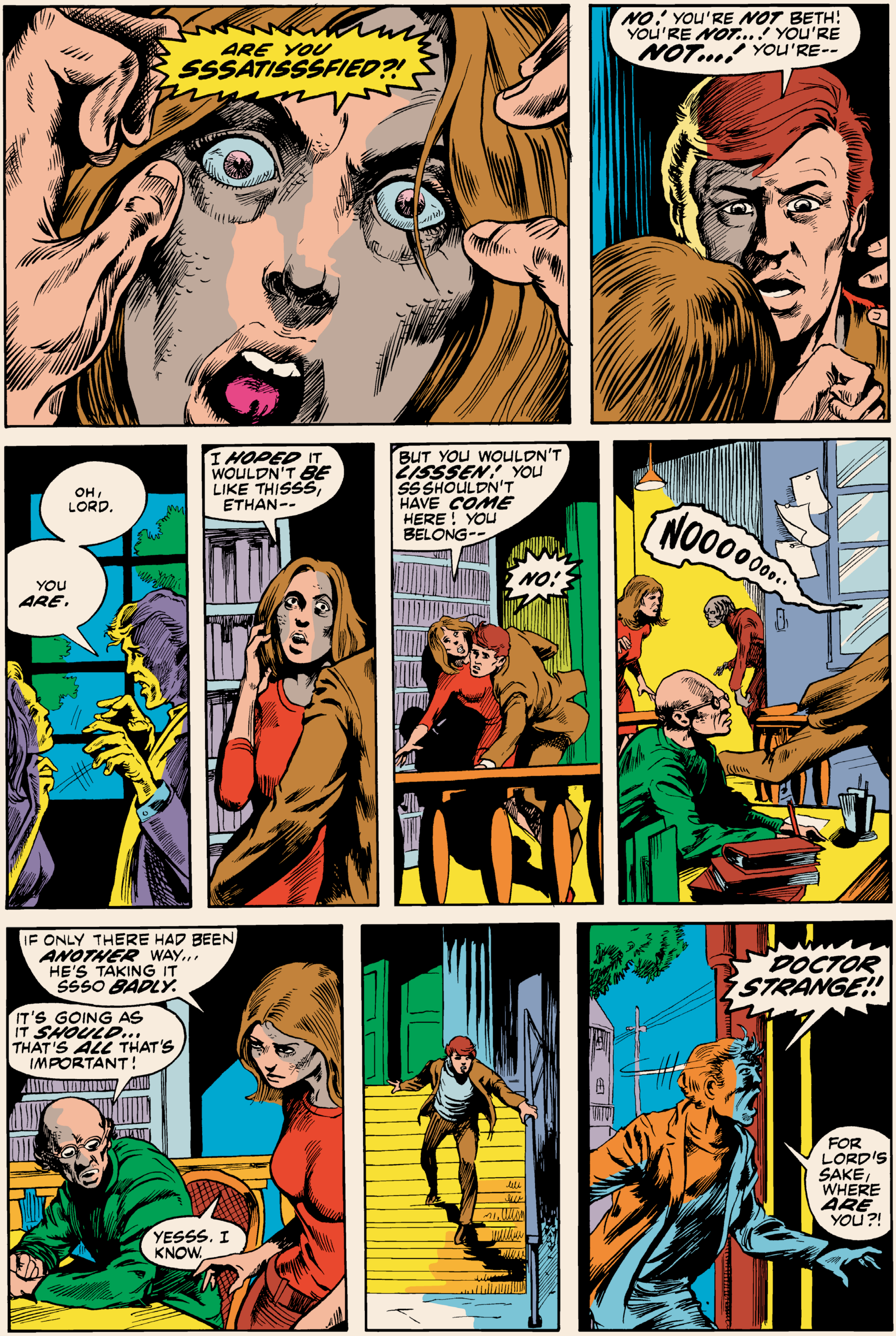

-- BUT NOT OF THE GRIM APPREHENSION, THE NAGGING DOUBT--
--THAT LED ME TO ARRANGE THIS ASSIGNATION WITH THE VENERATED ANCIENT ONE.
THIS WAY, MY SON. THROUGH THE CLOUDS DARK AND OMINOUS--
I WAIT. BUT I CANNOT DO SO LONG.
FOR, SINCE I SPOKE TO YOUR SERVANT.. I HAVE GAINED INSIGHT INTO EVENTS A'SHAPING.
EVENTS OF GREAT-- AND GREATLY EVIL-- PORTENT.
EVENTS THAT HAD THEIR BEGINNING IN A TIME BEFORE MAN WALKED THIS EARTH.
AS IS TOLD IN SUCH HELLISH VOLUMES AS THE THANATOSIAN TOMES, MASTER?
GOOD, MY DISCIPLE. YOU REMEMBER WELL THAT DARK CHRONICLE FROM YOUR STUDIES.
AY, IT-- AND OTHERS-- THE BLACK SEA SCROLLS, VON JUNZT'S UNAUSPRECHLICHEN KULTEN--
--ALL TELL OF A COSMIC OBSCENITY THAT SLUMBERS!
AND OF CULTS, OF LONG LOST RACES, THAT WAIT FOR THE DAY, THE HOUR, TO END THAT SLUMBER!
I FEAR, MY SON, THAT THAT TIME IS NEAR.
FORCES ARE MOVING ALL OVER THE GLOBE, STEPHEN STRANGE. ALREADY I AM ENGAGED IN BATTLE WITH THEM.
THEIR POWER IS OLDER THAN OURS, PERHAPS GREATER--
BUT WE EACH MUST FACE IT AS IT FINDS US, O PUPIL--
AND FOR EARTH, FOR HUMANKIND-- WE MUST WIN!
I GO NOW TO MY BATTLE--
--YOURS, I SUSPECT, LIES BELOW.
MAY THE VASHANTI GUIDE US BOTH!
AND SILENTLY, SOLEMNLY, DR. STRANGE RETURNS TO EARTHLY STARKSBORO... AND WHATEVER MAY AWAIT.

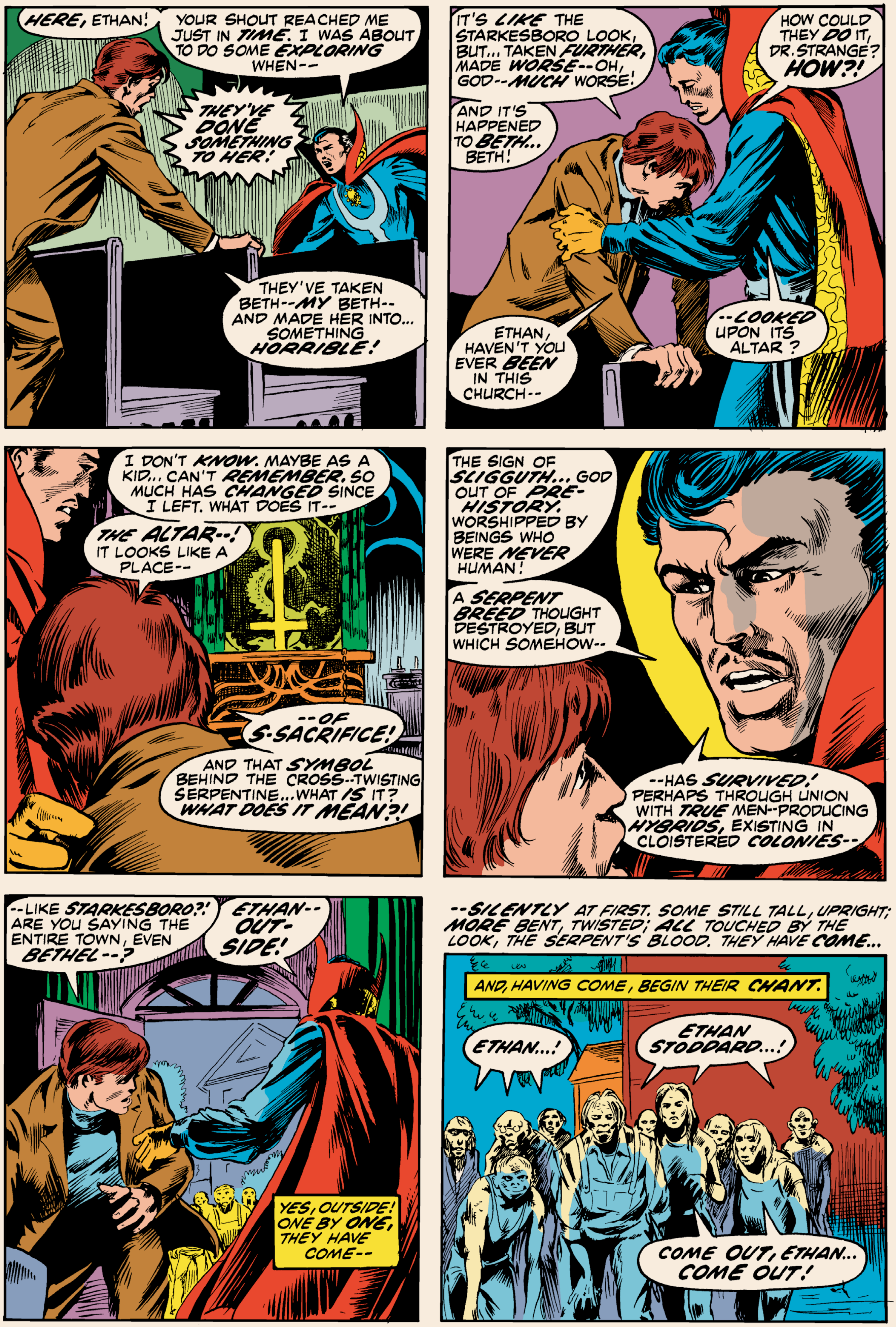

MORNING COMES, MAKING NIGHT'S GRIM EVENTS MORE DISTANT, DREAM-LIKE; OFFERING NEW PROMISES--
--OF HOPE.
--AND YOU FEEL OPTIMISTIC, ETHAN ?
SINCE THINKING ABOUT BETH--
--AND THIS WAY SHE'D GET WRAPPED UP IN STUDIES... COMPLETELY!
MAYBE THAT'S IT. MAYBE WHEN WE CHECK, I'LL FIND--
OH, EXCUSE ME, FRIEND. BUT IS THE TOWN LIBRARY STILL AT... AT...
I KNOW YOU... LEMUEL JOAD! WE PLAYED TOGETHER AS KIDS, B-BUT--
YOU'VE... C-CHANGED...!
HAVE I NOW, MR. HIGH 'N' MIGHTY STODDARD?
WELL, MY PA DIDN'T HAVE THE AIRS YOURS DID... MARRYIN' OUTSIDE STARKESBORO! NO, SIR!
AN' I DIDN'T LEAVE KITH AN' KIN FOR THE CITY.
SO IF I GOT THE LOOK OF A STARKESBORO MAN, IT'S 'CAUSE I AM... AN' PROUD TO BE!
LIBRARY'S WHERE IT ALWAYS WAS... NEXT TO THE CHURCH.
GOOD DAY TO YE, MISTER STODDARD!
WHEW! CHALK UP ANOTHER LITTLE SOMETHING I FORGOT ABOUT HOME--
THE STARKESBORO LOOK... GETS WORSE WITH AGE.
I GLIMPSED IT LAST NIGHT, NOT QUITE SO... CLEARLY.
WELL, IF I FIND BETH HERE LIKE I HOPE--
COMING IN, DOCTOR?
WE CAN ALL LEAVE THIS PLACE... FAST.
YOU AND YOUR FIANCEE SHOULD HAVE A MOMENT TO YOURSELVES--
--AND THE LOCAL CHURCH INTRIGUES ME.
AN INTRIGUE WELL-FOUNDED. FOR, IN THE SIMPLE ACT OF CROSSING THE BUILDING'S THRESHOLD...
...THE SPELL DISGUISING DR. STRANGE'S MYSTIC GARB SUDDENLY DISSIPATES...

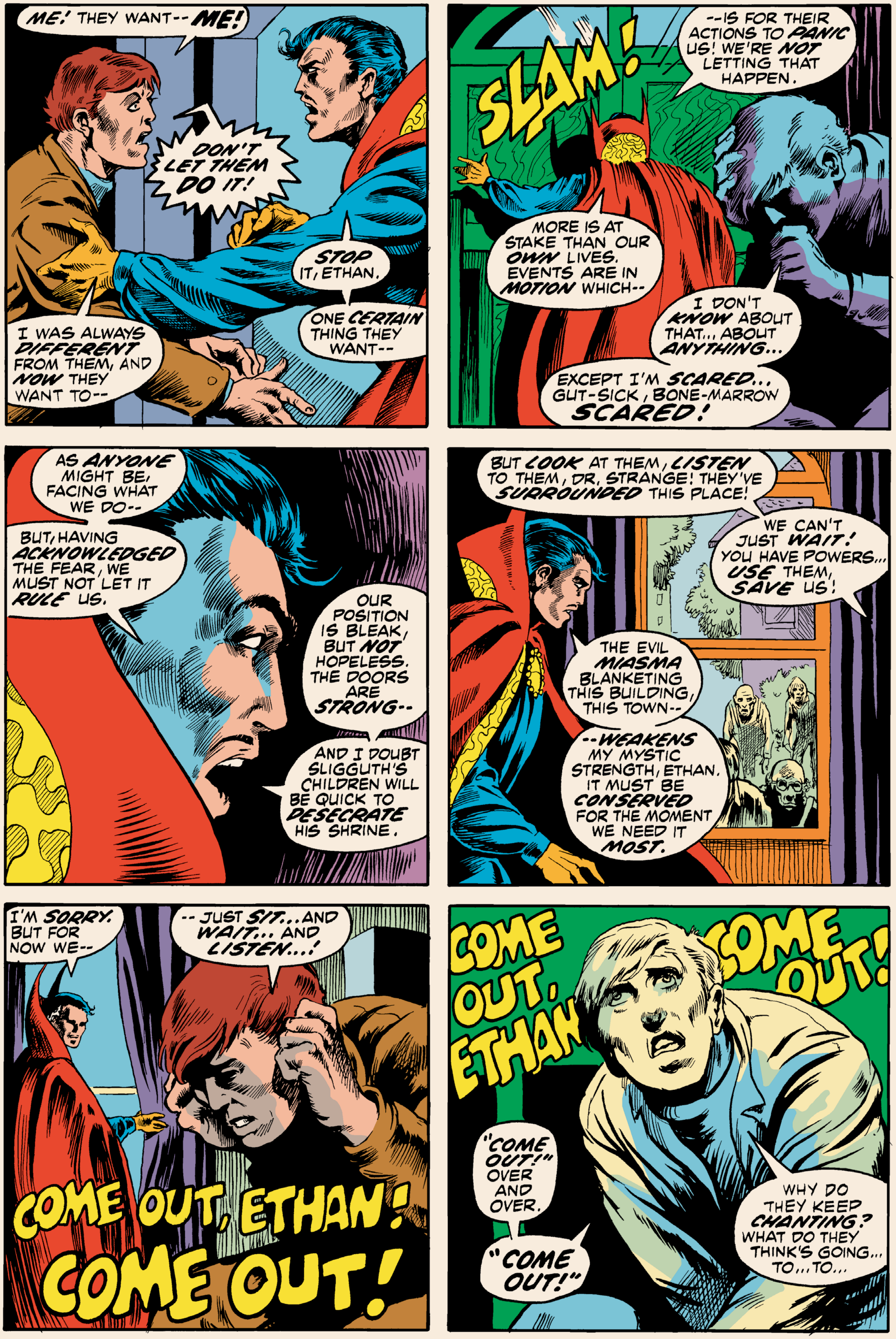

--BETHAL DOAN. SHE WAS SUPPOSEDLY STUDYING IN THIS LIBRARY, AND--
HEY! I DON'T EXPECT A WILD BURST OF WARMTH--
--BUT AT LEAST LOOK UP SO I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING.
I HEAR YE, ETHAN STODDARD--
--AN' I'M TELLIN' YE, YOU'VE NO BUSINESS HERE.
ONLY PLACE FOR YE IN STARKESBORO IS WITH THAT OUT-SIDER YE BROUGHT!
THANKS FOR THE OPINION.
OR IS THAT LOCAL POLICY?
EITHER WAY, I'M STAYING TO LOOK AROUND--
--ON MY... OWN...!
BETH!
...IT'S AS LAST NIGHT, WHEN I SENT FORTH MY ASTRAL FORM--
SOMETHING ACTS AGAINST MY MAGIC. THIS TIME MORE STRONGLY--
--COUNTERING AS I REASSERT MY SPELL.
BUT THAT IS TO BE EXPECTED. THE CHURCH SEEMS THE FOCAL POINT OF ACTIVITY IN TOWN.
AND IF FORCES OF THE ELDRITCH EVIL TOLD OF BY THE ANCIENT ONE MOVE IN STARKESBORO--
BY THE LOOK OF THIS PLACE, BY ITS VERY FEEL--
--IT IS FOCAL POINT FOR THEM AS WELL!

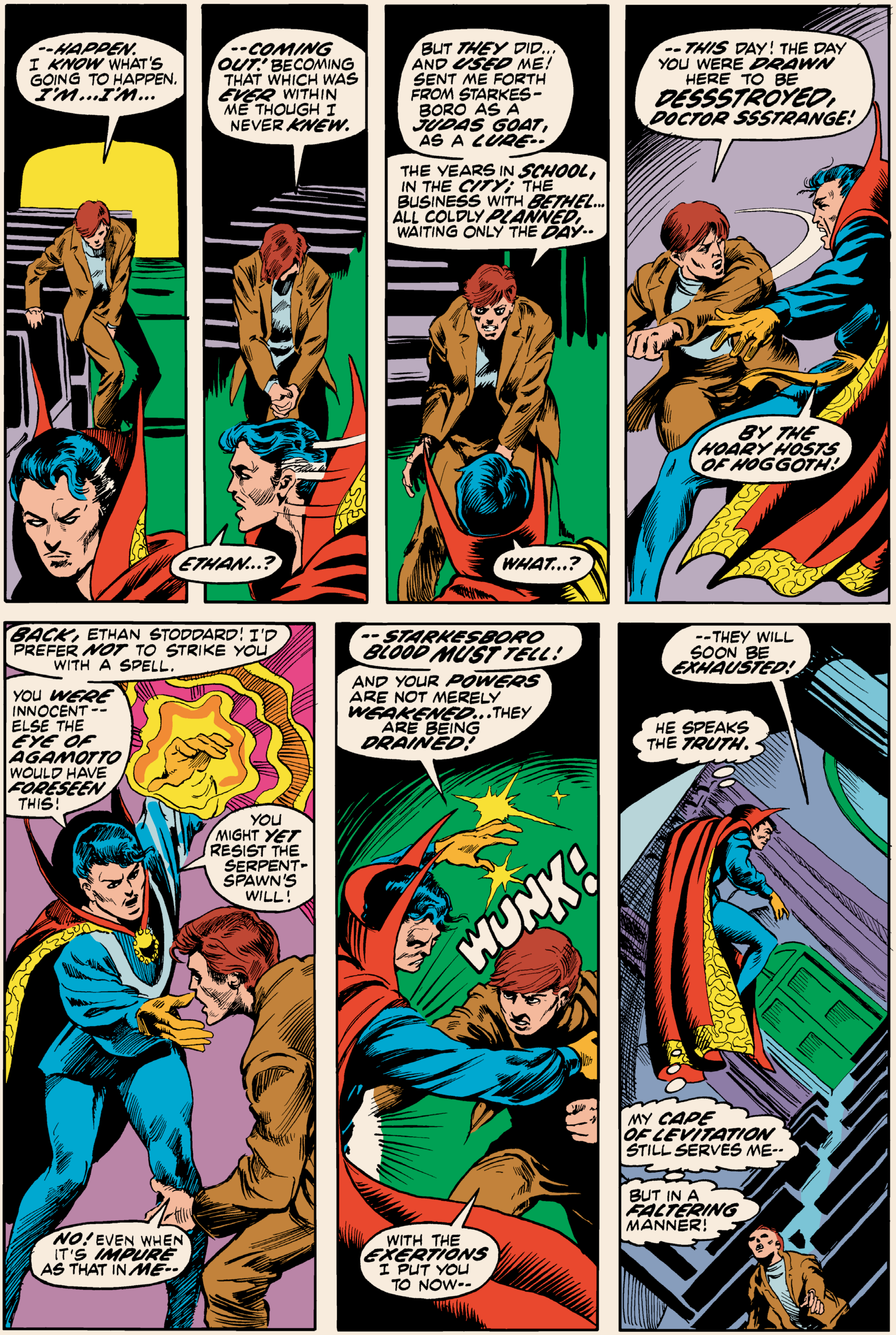

FOR, WHAT TRUE CHURCH EVER DISPLAYED SUCH AN ALTAR AS THIS?
WITH SHACKLES OF IRON, GRIM AND OMINOUS--
-- WITH DARK, DEEP STAINS ON ITS SURFACE, WHICH BETRAY ITS BLASPHEMOUS PURPOSE.
AND THE CROSS THAT HANGS ABOVE THE ALTAR--
TURNED UPSIDE DOWN... SIGN OF THE BLACK MASS!
SIGN OF-- SHADES OF THE SERAPHIM!
I WAS NOT CLOSE ENOUGH TO OBSERVE BEFORE--
--THE OTHER SYMBOL WHICH TWINES BEHIND THE CROSS!
ONE VIEWED ONLY IN THE MOST SINISTER OF OCCULT TOMES!
THIS IS NO HAUNT OF MERE DEMON WORSHIPPERS.
THAT IS THE MARK OF SLIGGUTH!
DREAD GOD OF THE SHADOWY SERPENT-FOLK OF PRE-CATACLYSMIC VALUSIA!
NOW IT IS CLEAR WHAT WORKS AGAINST MY OWN POWERS.
NOT SIMPLE SORCERY, BUT AN ENTIRE ATMOSPHERE OF UTMOST EVIL, OF DARKEST DEPRAVITY!
AS MUST EVER EXIST WHERE SUCH AS SLIGGUTH IS VENERATED!
THIS WILL NOT BE THE PLACE TO TEST WHETHER IT OR THE MAGIC OF DR. STRANGE IS --
THAT DOOR--!
IF THE CHURCH IS A MAELSTROM SPREADING AN AURA DARK AND DEBILITATING--
BEYOND HERE IS THE MAELSTROM'S HEART!
THE EMANATIONS ARE UNMISTAKABLE!

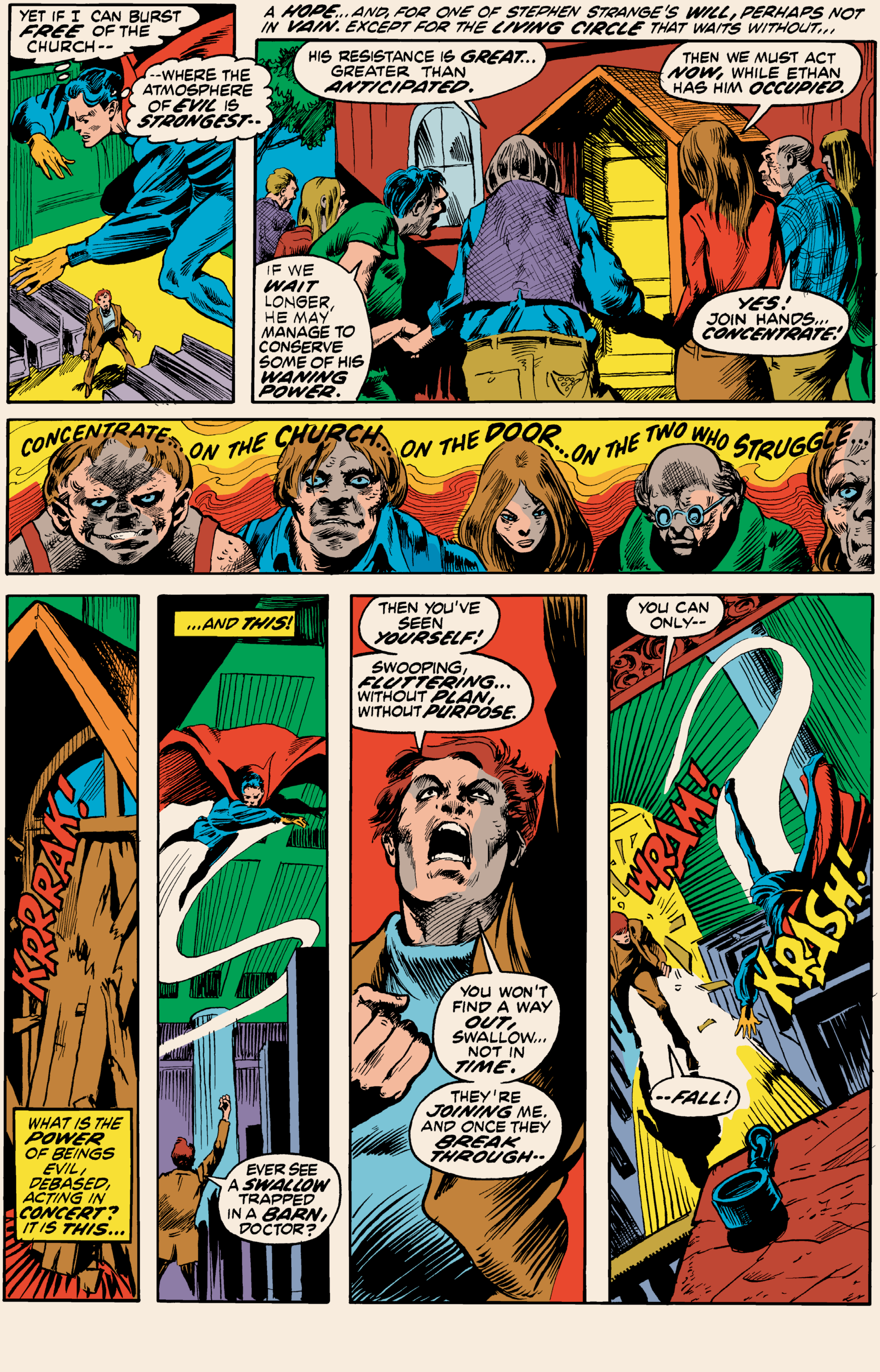

THE ANCIENT ONE SPOKE OF A COSMIC OBSCENITY THAT SLUMBERS.
COULD WHAT I SEE--?
NO!
THAT WHICH THE MASTER FEARS WILL NOT BE WAKENED BY SLIGGUTH'S SPAWN ALONE--
THEY ARE BUT PART OF A TAPESTRY VAST AND TERRIBLE.
BUT WHAT THEN IS THIS TWISTING LABYRINTH'S PURPOSE?
WITH ITS STENCH OF SLIME... OF DECAY..., OF PERHAPS THE GRAVE ITSELF?
I MUST SEE WHERE IT LEADS!
BETHEL!
BETH? WHAT'S WRONG?
DON'T YOU HEAR, DARLING?
IT'S ME, IT'S--
I KNOW, ETHAN. I HEARD.
YOU DON'T BELONG HERE!
GO! BACK TO YOUR FRIEND... TO THE OUTSIDER!
W-WHAT...?!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT, BETH? DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT I'VE GONE THROUGH?
AT LEAST STAND UP... FACE ME!
NO, ETHAN! DON'T!
DON'T? I'M YOUR FIANCE, THE GUY YOU LOVE! YOU CAN'T--
CAN'T...

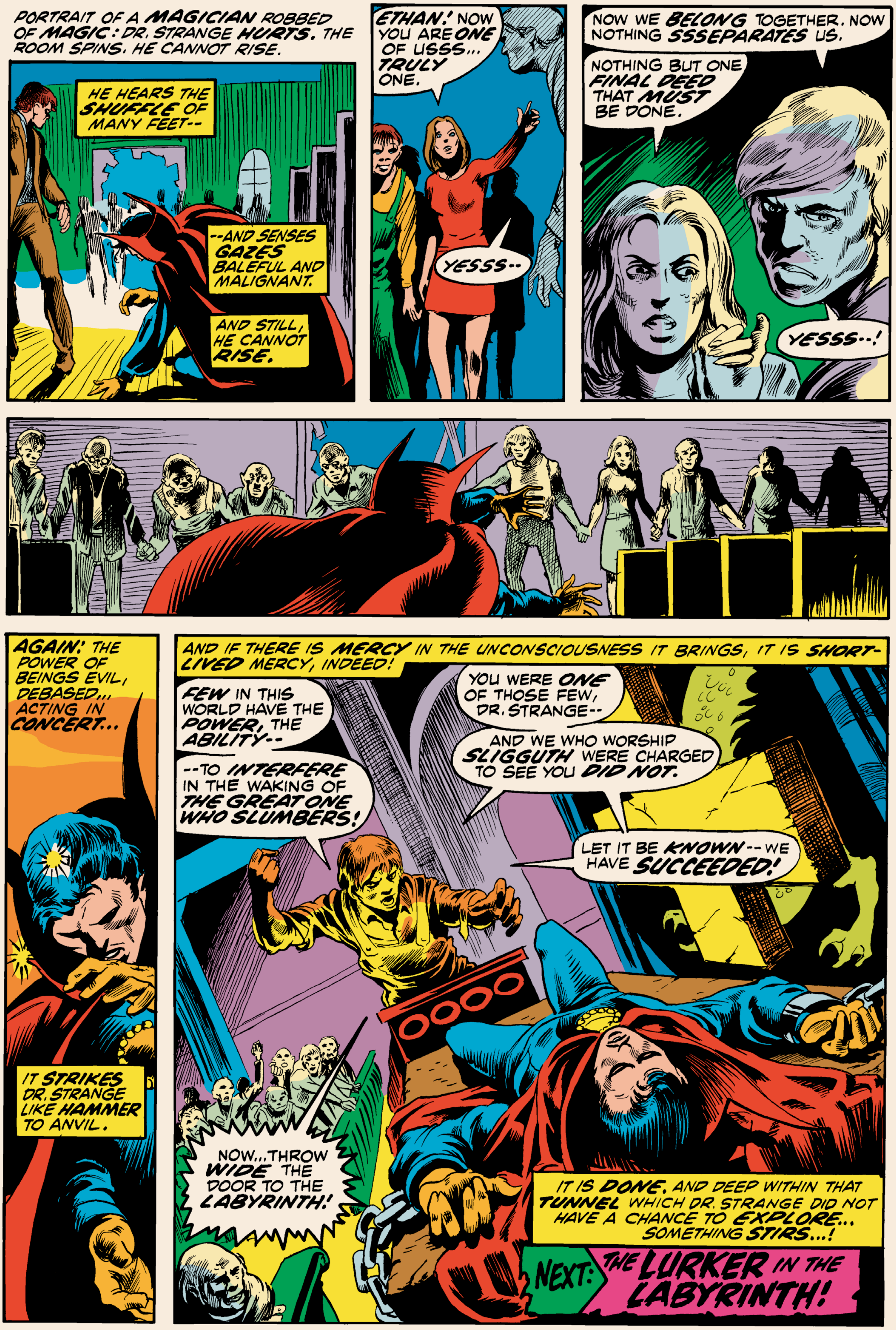

ARE YOU SSSATISSSSFIED?!
NO! YOU'RE NOT BETH! YOU'RE NOT...! YOU'RE NOT...! YOU'RE--
OH, LORD.
YOU ARE.
I HOPED IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE THISSS, ETHAN--
BUT YOU WOULDN'T LISSSEN! YOU SSSHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE! YOU BELONG--
NO!
NOOOOOoo..
IF ONLY THERE HAD BEEN ANOTHER WAY... HE'S TAKING IT SSSO BADLY.
IT'S GOING AS IT SHOULD... THAT'S ALL THAT'S IMPORTANT!
YESSS. I KNOW.
DOCTOR STRANGE!!
FOR LORD'S SAKE, WHERE ARE YOU?!


HERE, ETHAN!
YOUR SHOUT REACHED ME JUST IN TIME. I WAS ABOUT TO DO SOME EXPLORING WHEN--
THEY'VE DONE SOMETHING TO HER!
THEY'VE TAKEN BETH--MY BETH--AND MADE HER INTO... SOMETHING HORRIBLE!
IT'S LIKE THE STARKESBORO LOOK, BUT... TAKEN FURTHER, MADE WORSE--OH, GOD--MUCH WORSE!
AND IT'S HAPPENED TO BETH... BETH!
HOW COULD THEY DO IT, DR. STRANGE? HOW?!
ETHAN, HAVEN'T YOU EVER BEEN IN THIS CHURCH--
--LOOKED UPON ITS ALTAR?
I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE AS A KID... CAN'T REMEMBER. SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE I LEFT. WHAT DOES IT--
THE ALTAR--! IT LOOKS LIKE A PLACE--
--OF S-SACRIFICE!
AND THAT SYMBOL BEHIND THE CROSS--TWISTING SERPENTINE... WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?!
THE SIGN OF SLIGGUTH... GOD OUT OF PRE-HISTORY. WORSHIPPED BY BEINGS WHO WERE NEVER HUMAN!
A SERPENT BREED THOUGHT DESTROYED, BUT WHICH SOMEHOW--
--HAS SURVIVED! PERHAPS THROUGH UNION WITH TRUE MEN--PRODUCING HYBRIDS, EXISTING IN CLOISTERED COLONIES--
--LIKE STARKESBORO?! ARE YOU SAYING THE ENTIRE TOWN, EVEN BETHEL--?
ETHAN--OUT-SIDE!
YES, OUTSIDE! ONE BY ONE, THEY HAVE COME--
--SILENTLY AT FIRST. SOME STILL TALL, UPRIGHT; MORE BENT, TWISTED; ALL TOUCHED BY THE LOOK, THE SERPENT'S BLOOD. THEY HAVE COME...
AND, HAVING COME, BEGIN THEIR CHANT.
ETHAN...!
ETHAN STODDARD...!
COME OUT, ETHAN... COME OUT!


ME! THEY WANT-- ME!
I WAS ALWAYS DIFFERENT FROM THEM, AND NOW THEY WANT TO--
DON'T LET THEM DO IT!
STOP IT, ETHAN.
ONE CERTAIN THING THEY WANT--
SLAM!
--IS FOR THEIR ACTIONS TO PANIC US! WE'RE NOT LETTING THAT HAPPEN.
MORE IS AT STAKE THAN OUR OWN LIVES. EVENTS ARE IN MOTION WHICH--
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT... ABOUT ANYTHING...
EXCEPT I'M SCARED... GUT-SICK, BONE-MARROW SCARED!
AS ANYONE MIGHT BE, FACING WHAT WE DO--
BUT, HAVING ACKNOWLEDGED THE FEAR, WE MUST NOT LET IT RULE US.
OUR POSITION IS BLEAK, BUT NOT HOPELESS. THE DOORS ARE STRONG--
AND I DOUBT SLIGGUTH'S CHILDREN WILL BE QUICK TO DESECRATE HIS SHRINE.
BUT LOOK AT THEM, LISTEN TO THEM, DR. STRANGE! THEY'VE SURROUNDED THIS PLACE!
WE CAN'T JUST WAIT! YOU HAVE POWERS... USE THEM, SAVE US!
THE EVIL MIASMA BLANKETING THIS BUILDING, THIS TOWN--
--WEAKENS MY MYSTIC STRENGTH, ETHAN. IT MUST BE CONSERVED FOR THE MOMENT WE NEED IT MOST.
I'M SORRY. BUT FOR NOW WE--
-- JUST SIT... AND WAIT... AND LISTEN...!
COME OUT, ETHAN! COME OUT!
COME OUT, ETHAN
COME OUT!
"COME OUT!" OVER AND OVER.
"COME OUT!"
WHY DO THEY KEEP CHANTING? WHAT DO THEY THINK'S GOING... TO... TO...


--HAPPEN. I KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. I'M...I'M...
--COMING OUT! BECOMING THAT WHICH WAS EVER WITHIN ME THOUGH I NEVER KNEW.
ETHAN...?
BUT THEY DID... AND USED ME! SENT ME FORTH FROM STARKESBORO AS A JUDAS GOAT, AS A LURE--
THE YEARS IN SCHOOL, IN THE CITY; THE BUSINESS WITH BETHEL... ALL COLDLY PLANNED, WAITING ONLY THE DAY--
WHAT...?
--THIS DAY! THE DAY YOU WERE DRAWN HERE TO BE DESSSTROYED, DOCTOR SSSTRANGE!
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!
BACK, ETHAN STODDARD! I'D PREFER NOT TO STRIKE YOU WITH A SPELL.
YOU WERE INNOCENT-- ELSE THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO WOULD HAVE FORESEEN THIS!
YOU MIGHT YET RESIST THE SERPENT-SPAWN'S WILL!
NO! EVEN WHEN IT'S IMPURE AS THAT IN ME--
--STARKESBORO BLOOD MUST TELL!
AND YOUR POWERS ARE NOT MERELY WEAKENED...THEY ARE BEING DRAINED!
WUNK!
WITH THE EXERTIONS I PUT YOU TO NOW--
--THEY WILL SOON BE EXHAUSTED!
HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
MY CAPE OF LEVITATION STILL SERVES ME--
BUT IN A FALTERING MANNER!


YET IF I CAN BURST FREE OF THE CHURCH--
--WHERE THE ATMOSPHERE OF EVIL IS STRONGEST--
A HOPE... AND, FOR ONE OF STEPHEN STRANGE'S WILL, PERHAPS NOT IN VAIN. EXCEPT FOR THE LIVING CIRCLE THAT WAITS WITHOUT...
HIS RESISTANCE IS GREAT... GREATER THAN ANTICIPATED.
THEN WE MUST ACT NOW, WHILE ETHAN HAS HIM OCCUPIED.
IF WE WAIT LONGER, HE MAY MANAGE TO CONSERVE SOME OF HIS WANING POWER.
YES! JOIN HANDS... CONCENTRATE!
CONCENTRATE... ON THE CHURCH... ON THE DOOR... ON THE TWO WHO STRUGGLE...
KRRRAK!
WHAT IS THE POWER OF BEINGS EVIL, DEBASED, ACTING IN CONCERT? IT IS THIS...
...AND THIS!
EVER SEE A SWALLOW TRAPPED IN A BARN, DOCTOR?
THEN YOU'VE SEEN YOURSELF!
SWOOPING, FLUTTERING... WITHOUT PLAN, WITHOUT PURPOSE.
YOU WON'T FIND A WAY OUT, SWALLOW... NOT IN TIME.
THEY'RE JOINING ME. AND ONCE THEY BREAK THROUGH--
YOU CAN ONLY--
WRAM!
KRASH!
--FALL!


PORTRAIT OF A MAGICIAN ROBBED OF MAGIC: DR. STRANGE HURTS. THE ROOM SPINS. HE CANNOT RISE.
HE HEARS THE SHUFFLE OF MANY FEET--
--AND SENSES GAZES BALEFUL AND MALIGNANT.
AND STILL, HE CANNOT RISE.
ETHAN! NOW YOU ARE ONE OF USSS... TRULY ONE.
YESSS--
NOW WE BELONG TOGETHER. NOW NOTHING SSSEPARATES US.
NOTHING BUT ONE FINAL DEED THAT MUST BE DONE.
YESSS--!
AGAIN: THE POWER OF BEINGS EVIL, DEBASED... ACTING IN CONCERT...
IT STRIKES DR. STRANGE LIKE HAMMER TO ANVIL.
AND IF THERE IS MERCY IN THE UNCONSCIOUSNESS IT BRINGS, IT IS SHORT-LIVED MERCY, INDEED!
FEW IN THIS WORLD HAVE THE POWER, THE ABILITY--
--TO INTERFERE IN THE WAKING OF THE GREAT ONE WHO SLUMBERS!
YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE FEW, DR. STRANGE--
AND WE WHO WORSHIP SLIGGUTH WERE CHARGED TO SEE YOU DID NOT.
LET IT BE KNOWN -- WE HAVE SUCCEEDED!
NOW... THROW WIDE THE DOOR TO THE LABYRINTH!
IT IS DONE. AND DEEP WITHIN THAT TUNNEL WHICH DR. STRANGE DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO EXPLORE... SOMETHING STIRS...!
NEXT: THE LURKER IN THE LABYRINTH!

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: THE MARVEL COMICS GROUP, SECOND FLOOR, 625 MADISON AVE., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022

Dear People,

Ordinarily I wouldn't have written, but you did call for some kind of "scholar" to write in to identify those eight Golden Age heroes in Rick Jones' daydream in AVENGERS #92. Even so, I still wouldn't have written if I couldn't guess them. But I've managed to find in my extensive library of such things actual characters from the old times who bear remarkable resemblances to each of the figures depicted in that panel, to wit:

At top dead center, the figure with all the lines to indicate fire can only be the Human Torch; although for the record your old MYSTIC comic used to carry the Blue Blaze, who looked the same but was blue instead of red.

At his immediate left are the unmistakable head and winged feet of Namor the Sub-Mariner; at his right the equally unmistakable Captain America. Rick Jones must have been reading some pretty valuable literature, 'cause Cap's shield was that shape only in his very first issue.

Below Namor is the distinctive costume of The Fighting Yank (from Better Publications), and below the Yank the even more unusual Heap from Hillman Publications' "Airboy" comics of the 1940's.

The fellow with the cowl and cape at the lower right, with his arms outstretched in a flying pose is Prize Publications' Green Lama. Between him and Cap lies the individual who gave me the most trouble—Centaur Publications' Fantom of the Fair (or just Fantoman) fits the picture: face completely covered (you know how few heroes had costumes like that?), cape, black outfit.

Finally, the character way up in the left hand corner, with the little ears on his mask, is Holyoke's Cat-Man. I can't think of any other hero with an eared-costume besides B*tm*n who could fill the bill, and we KNOW it's not he!

You may send my no-prize in the form of a certified check for $10,000.00, payable to me:

George Olshevsky, Jr., 240 Highfield Road
Toronto 255, Ontario, Canada

Hmmm...we still feel we'd better not say either "yea" or "nay" on the matter, good neighbor. Still, you might just ask yourself—would we be printing your liltin' letter if there wasn't a pretty fair chance that you're tellin' it like it is? And now that that's straightened out, anybody want to fill in Marveldom Assembled on just where Blazing Skull, the Fin, and the other minor Marvel heroes (from AVENGERS #97) originally appeared? Now there'd be a real public service, people!

Mr. Lee,

Neal Adams is brilliant. So what else is new? AVENGERS #95—that's what's new! And how!

Mr. Adams is so amazing that, to do his artistic talent justice, I will simply say nothing further.

What did strike me as fantastic was Roy's concept— an inter-stellar war between inconceivably old, tremendously sophisticated, and unbelievably powerful civilizations. The Kree and the Skrull empires have been so vast and galaxy spanning that conflict of a major nature was imminent. And how well Mr. Thomas is handling it!

First the Inhuman Black Bolt reveals his awesome secrets to our waiting ears. Then there is conflict between Avengers and Mandroids; finally the Great Refuge is recaptured in an epic struggle to thrill and delight our imaginations. Beautiful.

What did distress me was the ending. No matter how powerful our Avengers are here on Earth, they couldn't possibly even begin to battle either the Kree or the Skrulls. The only Avenger who could resist the first attack would be Thor. And how long could even he stand against hordes of creatures armed with weapons beyond human ken?

Let's be realistic—all the super-heroes of Earth couldn't stand together against the forces unleashed by such ageless cultures. And while I'm on that subject, let the final battle come next issue. A winner must be declared—and I've a hunch that the aloof Intelligence Supreme knows all...

"All the world's a stage..."

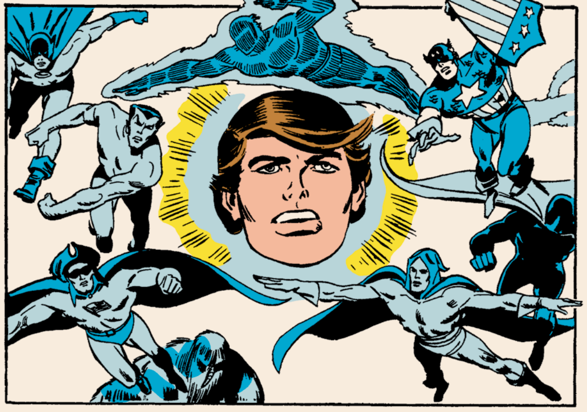
Matt Graham, 10442 Monogram Ave.
Granada Hills, Calif.

. . . And each element played its particular part in ish #97, right, friend?

From where we sit, it looks as if your crystal ball was definitely tuned to the right channel! As you said, not all the Avengers assembled could stand for long against the unleashed might of either the Kree or the Skrull race. But Rick Jones did—in a cataclysmic climax which comicdom will doubtless be talking about many years hence.

Incidentally, we heartily concur on the mammoth talent of Neal Adams (whose awesome artistry will be briefly glimpsed in an upcoming issue of ASTONISHING TALES, featuring Ka-Zar); still, we kinda think we've found another Avengers Illustrator Par Excellence in Barry Smith, whose power-packed pencils for our very next epic will probably make AVENGERS #100 the most widely-acclaimed centennial issue of all!

Why not be here, Matt, and see if our crystal ball's in as good shape as yours!



STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
ACT OF AUGUST 12, 1970: SECTION 3685,
TITLE 39, UNITED STATES CODE

1. Title of Publication: THE AVENGERS.

2. DATE OF FILING: September 23, 1971.

3. Frequency of Issue: Monthly, except August when Semi-Monthly.

4. Location of Known Office of Publication: 625 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

5. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 625 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

6. Names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and managing editor are: Publisher: Martin Goodman, 625 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; Editor: Stan Lee, 625 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022; Managing Editor: John Verpoorten, 625 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

7. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given.) Magazine Management Co., Inc., 625 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022; Cadence Industries Corp.. 641 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities (If there are none, so state) None.

9. For optional completion by publishers mailing at the regular rates (Section 132.121, Postal Service Manual) 39 U.S.C. 3626 provides in pertinent part: "No person who would have been entitled to mail matter under former section 4359 of this title shall mail such matter at the rates provided under this subsection unless he files annually with the Postal Service a written request for permission to mail matter at such rates."

In accordance with the provisions of this statute, I hereby request permission to mail the publication named in Item 1 at the reduced postage rates presently authorized by 39 U.S.C. 3626.

(Signature, title of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner)

10. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. (Section 132.122, Postal Manual.) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes. (Check one.) ☐ Have not changed during preceding 12 months. ☐ Have changed during preceding 12 months. (If changed, publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement.)

11. EXTENT AND NATURE OF CIRCULATION.

A. Total No. Copies Printed (net press run): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 342,236; single issue nearest to filing date: 361,482.

B. Paid Circulation: 1) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 205,169; single issue nearest to filing date: 187,237. 2) Mail subscriptions. Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1,309; single issue nearest to filing date: 1,355.

C. Total paid circulation: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 206,478; single issue nearest to filing date: 188,592.

D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means. 1) Samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 110; single issue nearest to filing date: 110. 2) Copies distributed to news agents, but not sold: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 134,523; single issue nearest to filing date: 171,475.

E. Total distribution (sum of C and D): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 341,111; single issue nearest to filing date: 360,177.

F. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1,125; single issue nearest to filing date: 1,305.

G. Total (sum of E & F—should equal net press run shown in A): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 342,236; single issue nearest to filing date: 361,482.

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(signed) R. C. Le Craw (Business Manager)

ARE YOU SSSATISSSSFIED?!

Following issues by fill-in artists Sam Kweskin, Frank Brunner, P. Craig Russell, and Jim Starlin, Brunner took over the art on the Doctor Strange series in Marvel Premiere*. Doctor Strange avoids being sacrificed to Sligguth, but he continues to battle his way up a hierarchy of Lovecraftian monsters and only achieves victory in* Marvel Premiere *#10 through the sacrifice of the Ancient One's life.*

The End.

This first of a three-volume series collecting the legendary Barry Windsor-Smith's work at Marvel features his early work on X-Men, The Avengers, Doctor Strange, and Iron Man, as well as his amazing run on Ka-Zar in *Astonishing Tales* and much more.

BACK TO THE SAVAGE LAND: BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH AT MARVEL VOL. 1

From the moment Marvel brought him to the U.S. in 1969, Windsor-Smith rapidly developed a unique, eye-opening style, combining intricately detailed realism with the dreamlike lushness of art nouveau and late-1960s psychedelia. This volume focuses on the earliest of his work, including memorable storylines on *The Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Doctor Strange*, and individual stories for *Chamber of Darkness*, *Tower of Shadows*, and *Nick Fury*, *Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* All new benchmarks of comics art, culminating in what may be the highlight of this period: Windsor-Smith's collaboration with writer Gerry Conway on an epic tale of civil war in *Ka-Zar's Savage Land*.

MARVEL CREATOR COLLECTION NO. 1

BACK TO THE SAVAGE LAND

BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH AT MARVEL VOL. 1

FANTAGRAPHICS

MARVEL

© 2026 MARVEL